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SERMONS

FOR EVERY

SUNDAY

In the YEAR.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By F. BL*TH, Disc. CAR.—S.T.P.

VOLUME II.

For the Second Quarter of the ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.



L O N D O N:

Printed, by J. HOYLES, for the AUTHOR.

MDCCLXII.

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FOR EVERY

SUNDAY

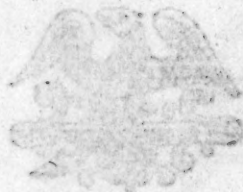
In the YEAR

IN FOUR VOLUMES

By F. B. TH. D. D. CARLTON

VOLUME II

For the Second Quarter of the Christian Year



LONDON:

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S E R M O N

ON THE

First SUNDAY in L E N T.

St. MATTHEW iv. 1, 2, 3, 11.]

JESUS was led by the Spirit into the Desert, to be tempted by the Devil. And when He had fasted forty Days and forty Nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the Tempter approach'd. . . . And when the Devil left him; behold, Angels came and minister'd to him.



JESUS led into Temptation,
Beloved Brethren! What
Mortal then shall be exempt
from It? JESUS submit to
undergo Temptation! What
Mortal shall murmur at en-
during It, or despair of sur-
mounting It? Shall innocent JESUS arm
against the very Approach of Temptation
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with a forty-days austere Retreat; and his sinful Disciples presume to grapple with it, without any Preparation at all? Why, think You, would our Divine Master be tempted, but to encourage us to endure Temptation with Patience and Fortitude, when It comes? Why would he arm against Temptation, with so long, so painful, so continued an Abstinence, but to teach us that Temptations are dangerous Evils? Why would he be led by his Divine Spirit to the Encounter of Temptations, but to shew us that all the Evil of Temptations lies in our cowardly Fear or arrogant Contempt of them? And why would he manifest his Victory in a glorious solemn Triumph amidst an illustrious Band of ministring Angels, but to convince us, that our perfidious Tempter may be and is to be conquer'd and that the Victory over him is rewarded with the noblest, richest most desirable Fruits of Glory? But What! Tempter, *did I say*? Ah! Many are the Tempters, who urge us to Combat: Many are the Temptations which besiege us from without, or watch to betray us within. GOD himself is sometimes pleased to tempt us: The *Devil* is always busy in tempting us: And we ourselves are too often taking *Satan's* Work out of his Hands, by being our own Tempters. And under this last Circumstance it is, that we have the most to fear. For when GOD is our
Tempter,

Tempter, it is our own Fault, if we are
 not Safe: He tempting us, or rather exciting
 us, only to Good, by such Trials as he is
 pleased to send us to try our Fidelity to
 him. *Let no Man then, when he is tempted*
to Sin, say that He is tempted by GOD. For
 GOD, as St. James observes, * is not a * Chap. i.
Tempter of Evils. No: In that Sense, *He*
tempt's no Man † When He does send you † Ibid.
 Trials, 'tis for your Good; O Christians: Nor
 does He even send or permit them beyond
 your Power to bear, or without giving you
 the Means and Graces necessary to reap Ad-
 vantage from them. No, no; says St. PAUL † † 1 Cor. x.
GOD is Faithful, who will not suffer you to
be tempted above what you can, but will
work also with Temptation Advantage, that
you may be able to, sustain. In short, there-
 fore is it, that the Lord your GOD tempteth
 You, THAT IT MAY APPEAR WHETHER
 YOU LOVE HIM, OR NOT, WITH ALL YOUR
 HEART. § Different, very different from, § Deuteron.
 this, is the Conduct of Satan. He tempts, xiii.
 us, to surprise us; tempts us, to betray us;
 tempts us, to destroy us. But! vain are all
 his Temptations; unless we give him a
 helping hand, by tempting ourselves. " Ob-
 serve, says St. John Chrysostom upon this
 " Gospel, observe: When the Devil took
 " our Lord up to the Pinnacle of the
 " Temple, the Fiend push'd him not,
 " touch'd him not; but only say'd to Him:

*St. Matth iv. “ *Cast thyself down.* * Whence we may
 “ learn, that Every-one who obeys the
 “ *Devil* precipitates himself rather than He
 “ is precipitated. For the *Devil* may sug-
 “ gest, but cannot force.” Ourselves then
 are our own worst and most dangerous
 Tempters.

If our Tempters are Many; our Temp-
 tations are many also. Some are *Inter-
 nal*; *External* Others: Of the *Internal*
 Ones, Some arise from the Illusion of the
 Sense and Imagination (wretched Fruits of
 our original Sin :) which we may be subject
 to sometimes, without any actual Sin on our
 Side; provided we are patient in enduring,
 and faithful in conquering, them. For
 Every-one is tempted by his own Concu-
 piscence abstracted and allured. † Others pro-
 ceed from the Corruption of the Will itself;
 and therefore generally presuppose Some ante-
 rior Guilt for their Cause and are seldom
 without some Degree of actual Guilt
 in the very Temptation itself. For, Con-
 cupiscence, when It hath conceived by con-
 sent or Dilectation, bringeth forth Sin, more
 or less. But neither Sort of These *Internal*
 Temptations could possibly affect the sacred
 Person of Christ, who, in virtue of his Hy-
 postatic Union, was perfect God and perfect
 MAN; and therefore free from every moral
 or physical Blemish within him. Of *Exter-
 nal* Temptations there are also various Sorts;
 Such

Such are the different Objects of our Senses, according to the false Lights in which they are proposed to us: Such are the Suggestions of the *Devil* and the Gay Allurements of the World: Such too are the Multitude of different Tribulations, Afflictions, Disappointments and Sufferings, to which all Human Nature, since the fall of the first Man, are indiscriminately subject. Now all these of Themselves are capable only of affecting us outwardly; and therefore cannot be sinful, unless we render them so by Consent or Dilectation. Nay they are rich in the greatest Fruits of Glory and Beatitude, if, after the Example of Christ we bear them with Patience and Fortitude. And therefore says St. JAMES, *Blessed is the Man who suffereth Temptation: For when he hath been proved, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which GOD hath promised to Them who love him.* * There is then this Difference between * *Ibid.* *Internal* Temptations and *External* Ones, that All the *Former* are Evils which Nothing but a special Grace of God can render tolerable, and Nothing can render desirable: Whereas Some of the *Latter* are, not a bare tolerable Evil, but a desirable Good, to Such as persist in a faithful Improvement of those Graces which God affords to All to surmount them. And therefore was it, that the Saviour of the World, who neither would nor could subject his spotless unspot-
table

table Nature to the Blemish of *Internal* Temptations, nevertheless, to set you an Example, both could and would desire and encounter *External* Temptations, for the sake of conquering them. Therefore would the Divine JESUS *be led by the Spirit, into the Desert, to be tempted by the Devil*, that, putting him to Flight, He might convince you by conquering him, that the Fiend is an impotent Tempter. Therefore would he court Hunger with a Fast of forty Days, to convince you, by seeking it Himself, that Bodily Sufferings are a desirable Good. Therefore would he with Fortitude sustain the Suggestion of *Satan*, to relieve his Hunger at the Expence of a Miracle; that, by repelling it, he might teach you not to presume, in Time of Distress, to set God a Time for your Deliverance, but to wait his Good-Pleasure with magnanimous Resignation. Therefore would he permit that the Fiend should persuade him to release himself from the Pain of Hunger by casting himself down from the Pinnacle; that, by the Contempt of it, he might set You a Lesson of Patience and shew you that the Delays of Divine Succour are rather Matter of fresh Confidence in the Divine Goodness than of Despair in his Providence. Therefore did he suffer the infernal Rebel to carry his Insolence even to the offering him *all the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them* for one Act of Adoration,

Adoration; that the Indignation with which he banish the impious Suggester from his Presence might finish to convince you, that the World and it's Pleasures are of the worst Kind of Temptations, and therefore ever to be shun'd as much as possible, on account of their natural Tendency to enervate Devotion, to dissipate the Mind, and to drawing off the Heart of Man from his due Allegiance to his Sovereign Lord, and only Good. And therefore, in a word, did he, after subduing all These, suffer the Angels to administer to him; that he might encourage you to struggle manfully against the *Devil*, the World and your own Flesh, in Sight of the glorious Premium promised to your Fidelity; and that he might convince you, that all the *External* Temptations, which can attack you, are desirable, or, at least, tolerable; if you will but resolve to make a faithful Use of the Graces which God is ready to afford you. At least tolerable, *I say*: For certain it is, that even of *External* Temptations, there are Some, which, tho', when they attack us, we may undergo without either Sin or Imperfection, while they are involuntary, yet may we not either wish for or court them: Such are the Gaeties and Intrigues of the World: Familiarities with beauteous or otherwise engaging Persons of opposite Sex, the Extremities of either Want or Affluence,

Affluence, the Mental Suggestions and Illusions of *Satan*, or the flattering Incentives of the *Flesh*. All which, on Account of the intimate Alliance offensive and defensive ever subsisting between them and the Imagination, Senses and sensual Passions, are extremely dangerous and very difficult to endure without Some Degree of internal Detriment. And therefore is it that tho' It be a Blessing to suffer such Temptations undefiledly; and tho' Christ did so; yet as we are not confirm'd in Grace as He was, nor certain of our own Fidelity in corresponding to his Graces; we cannot be sure that we shall come-off with Victory: Nor have we Reason to hope we shall, if we wittingly run into the Danger; since, according to the Holy Ghost, *He who loves Danger shall perish in it*. We may then and must endure and resist all Temptations of this kind when they come upon us; But we may not by any Means procure or desire them. The only *External* Temptations which we may with any Safety go in Search of are Tribulations, Disappointments and temporal Crosses. Because These we are sure we may obtain Grace and *seasonable Aid* to conquer and improve to our Advantage, if we approach but with Confidence to the Throne of God to implore the Assistance we want. For as *St. Paul* justly observes, *We have not a*
High-

High-Priest who cannot have Compassion on our Infirmities; but tempted in all things, like as we are, without Sin. * And there- * *Heb. iv.*
fore In That, in which He-himself suffer'd and was tempted, he is able to help Them also who are tempted. † Tribulations then are, not † *Ibid. ii.*
 only tolerable Evils, but a desirable Good; and the only Kind of Temptations which we may with any Safety covet and court. Whereas, alas, such is the strange Perversity of human Nature that These, tho' the best Arms to storm Heaven with, are, of all Kinds of Temptation, the Only-Ones which we endeavour to shun. To recall you therefore from so prejudicial an Error, and lead you back to the Imitation of your suffering tempted Lord, in this holy Time of Penance and Patience; I shall endeavour to reconcile you to temporal Suffering, by shewing You, that

I. Temporal Afflictions are Matter of Necessity to Sinners:

II. Are Matter of Debt for the Penitent: *And*

III. Are Matter of enviable Gain for the *Just.*

“ O God of tender Mercy! Have Thou
 “ Compassion on our native Frailty. And
 “ teach us by thy Grace, as Thou has't
 “ taught us by Example, to be enamour'd
 “ with the Blessing of suffering for and
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“ with Thee. Strengthen us to endure
 “ with Christian Fortitude every Tribula-
 “ tion or Affliction which Thou permittest,
 “ and permit what Thou pleasest. Give us
 “ but Constancy to bear and forbear, and
 “ exercise it as Thou wilt, Augment our
 “ Patience, and encrease our Pains: Try,
 “ tempt and prove and purify thy Servants
 “ in this Life; and here spare us not, so
 “ Thou but spare us for Eternity.”

I. Temporal Sufferings are of Two Sorts.
 Those which come from our own deliberate
 Choice are one Sort: Such as voluntary
 Mortifications and supererogatory Works
 of Penance. And These, if they be sought
 with a pure and fervent Heart for the Love
 of God, are undoubtedly highly pleasing in
 the Eyes of his Divine Majesty. However
 that Share which our Will has in the Choice
 of them often very considerably diminishes
 the Sensibility of the Suffering and leaves be-
 hind it, more or less, such a Zest of Self-love
 as lessens in some Degree the Merit of our
 Patience. The Other Sort of Sufferings are
 They which come from the Hand of God
 himself, whether by his own positive Dis-
 pensation, *immediately*, as when he tried
 his Servant *Abraham* by demanding the
 Life of his only Son *Isaac*, or *mediately*, by
 Second Causes, as when he afflicted his
 Servant *David* with a severe Disease; or
 whether

whether by his permissive Providence, through the Industry or Artifice of *Satan*, as when he permitted the Fiend to torment his Servant *Job*; through the Malice or Inveteracy of Enemies, as when *David* was persecuted by *Saul*, *Elijah* by *Jezabel*; through the mistake or Jealousy of Friends or Relations, as when the Patriarch *Joseph* was set at Bay by his Brethren; or finally, in natural Consequence of our own Folly or Vice, as when *Esau* lost his Birth-Right to his Brother *Jacob*, or when *Sampson* Conqueror of the whole Nation of *Philistins* was conquer'd by a sordid Passion for *Dalila*. Now all these Sorts of Tribulation, whatever Quarter they come from or to whatever wise End God disposes them, whether to guard our Innocence or to punish our past Guilt, or to purify our Virtue; They are of sovereign Service, if we do but bear them as we may, and struggle with them as we ought. But still Those Sufferings which come to us from the Hand of God are, abundantly more exuberant in Grace and Merit, if we make a right Use of them than all the Mortification and Penance we can practice of ourselves. The Reason is that, in voluntary Sufferings, we have at least the Satisfaction of doing our own Will in some Measure; whereas, in Those which the Almighty either sends or permits, our Will has no Share but That which a Christian

Conformity with the Divine Will gives to it, This is so true, that, abstracting from all Considerations of that Heroic Conformity, the greatest Saints in this Life, rather than undergo one Stripe of God's avenging or purifying Hand, would gladly compound to endure all the Sufferings Themselves could inflict upon Themselves. So that Voluntary Mortifications and Penance cannot be consider'd as of the number of real Temptations; but are rather so many Means to familiarize us and make us in Love with the Temptations of *External* Tribulations which God is pleased to inflict upon us, or at least to permit us to be tried with from other Quarters. In fact, it was not, till after the Prophet had enured his Flesh to a certain Familiarity with Suffering, by voluntary Mortification and penitential Exercises, as himself explains it, *In the Day of my Tribulation I sought God with my Hands in the Night before him, and I was not deceived; My Soul refused to be comforted, I was mindful of GOD and was delighted and was exercised and I swept my Spirit: ** It was not *I say*, 'till after he had made use of these Means, that he was enabled by Grace to court and covet and pray for the Tribulations and Temptations with which God should please to visit him. Then then it was, that, fired with a holy Zeal of suffering

* Psalm.
lxxvi.

suffering for GOD and of being purified and fitted for HIM in the Furnace of Tribulations, he cried out: *Try me, O God, and tempt my Heart, with Afflictions, examine me with Sufferings and know my Paths.* *

* Psalm
cxxxviii.

Ah Beloved Christians of mine! Such, Such too ought to be your Eagerness after Tribulations: And such it would be, had you but, by a Life of voluntary Mortification and Penance, learn'd to set a true Value upon the Blessing of enduring Afflictions with a truly Christian Fortitude. To All of you, I speak, Beloved: As well to You, O Innocents, as to Penitents and Sinners.

But if any Christians, more than Others, ought to view with a thanks-giving Eye and a Heart full of Gratitude, those Afflictions with which GOD's merciful Providence embitters every Cup in this mortal Life; it cannot be denied but that Sinners have the greatest Reason of All to be eternally Grateful to their Gracious GOD for the Tribulations they meet with. Fondly, ah fondly, ought they to kiss the gentle Rod which chastises them: To melt their Souls to grateful Tenderness, enough it should be to find, that, spite of the innumerable Excesses by which they have forfeited the noble Character of Children of the Most High, GOD has not lost the tender Industry of a Compassionate Parent: And with Reason

son might they adopt the Words which *St. Peter Chrysologus* puts into the Mouth of the Prodigal Son: " We indeed have
" forfeited the Character of Children: But
" He has not renounced the Bowels of a
" tender Parent." It is not to Reprobates I mean to speak; but to Those Sinners, who, without any Design of renouncing their Pretensions to Glory, run a Sort of Sideling Race after the mean Joys of this Life; and, consecrating the Flower of their Affections to the Earth, still retain a Hankering after *Heaven*. The eternal *Jerusalem* is the Termination of Career which they propose to themselves: But alas so oblique is the Road along which they rather reel than travel, that, without perceiving, they turn their Backs upon the Blissful City and steer headlong to *Babylon*. This, This it is which rouses the Divine Mercy to exert itself in every gracious Stratagem of Love, to stop the straying Mortals in their down-hill Course. Too much does it affect the tender Heart of their Divine Redeemer, to behold the Flock of his own Purchase thus madly bent on precipitating themselves into the Jaws of eternal Ruin. Therefore does he with the loudest Menaces, dictated by an excess of Tendernefs, endeavour to strew with Horrors that Way which their deluded Imagination presents to them spread with

with Lillies and Violets; that he may shew them the Danger of their daring Pursuits and persuade them to return on their Steps. But ah! what Voice shall he speak to them in, which will work the desired Effect? To force them is destroying the Nature he gave them of Free-Agents: And to win them to Consent, what salutary Counsels shall find Way to their Hearts who lock-up every Avenue to them? Shall He graciously court them with the secret Language of internal Inspirations? To what Purpose? Sinners have acquired too confirm'd a Habit of treating Inspirations with ignominious Repulses. Shall he thunder out his Menaces by the eloquent Mouth of some Apostle of his, whose authorized Zeal cites their Vices to Judgment and lashes their Disorders in Public? Ah! Enough is it, that a Preacher with a just Energy inveigh against their Crimes, for Sinners to keep at the remotest Distance from him. Shall he lodge his sacred Maxims in some Book of Piety, where, unsuspected, they may secretly insinuate themselves into the Hearts of the Sinners who read? Alas, alas! Unaccustom'd are their Hands to open, or their Eyes to peruse, any other Books, than Those which, as if stamp'd with Poison, convey to the Soul in every Word a Wound. Ah! what then shall JESUS, wishful to save them, be able to do? He is willing by all Means

Means to have them his own: They are resolved by all Means to have Any-One for their Owner but JESUS. What then shall GOD do with such obstinate Creatures, who will not consent to be saved and whom he will not save without their Consent, tho' he created them to be saved? What shall he do? He will do by Them as by *Jonah*.

The Prophet *Jonah* is commanded by GOD to go and preach Penance to *Niniveb*. But dishearten'd at the Danger he conceives in the Boldness of the Enterprize and conquer'd by his false Fears, he ventures, with a worse-concerted Boldness, to disregard the Divine Commission; and, to steer a quite opposit Course, takes Shipping for *Tharfis*. O my GOD! Full sensible am I, that Thou knowest how to compel thy Vassals to obey thee, when Thou wilt be obey'd. But if thy Creatures are Deaf to thy heavenly Voice, how shall they reach to understand thy Will? How! Even as *Jonah* did. A Sedition arises in the Elements, The Winds, the foaming Surges, the fire-breathing Clouds, with every Horror of revolting Nature, gather round the Vessel, which the daring Rebel sails in; and with rude Contest dispute the Office of forcing through every Sense a Passage to his Soul by which the Almighty Sovereign's Will may enter. But to what Use All this? With what Success? So far is it from re-
calling

calling the *Refractory* to a Sense of his Duty; that all the bursting Waves, which, rolling-over, almost over-set the bulging Bark, but serve, like the nightly Murmurs of some neighbouring Rivulet, to sooth him to a calm Repose. The Ocean rages more and more; the Winds blow fierce with growing Fury; the encreasing Billows batter the wooden Fortrefs with still augmenting Force, and the pale trembling Sailors seek their last Recourse in Prayer; While *Jonah*, all the while, with undisturb'd Serenity, amidst the loud Reports of heavenly Wrath, not only rests but sleeps. Ah! shall He then, buried thus in slothful Sleep, be swallow'd by Destruction ere he see it coming? Shall *Jonah*, thus without Redress (lost to Life ---- to *Heaven* ---- to God ---- to Himself ----) perish amidst the consuming Flood, to perish eternally in unconsuming Fire. No, no: My God! Had this been thy Design; Thou had'st no need to call a Tempest to thy Assistance. The soothing Serenity of a treacherous Calm had lull'd him as well and lock'd all his Senses in as profound a Sleep, till, through some hidden Leak the insinuating Waters had wreak'd thy Vengeance on the fleeing Rebel. The Storms which arise from the discording Elements are often big with Danger: While those which are excited by the saving Hand of God, are but the rougher Pilots which

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guide us to Harbour in Safety. Happy, happy for *Jonah* was it that he fail'd not in a Calm: A Calm might have lost him. Not to be lost he must be terrified. Nay not to be terrified, without Fruit; he must be swallow'd-up, with sparing Vengeance, and pass from the Bosom of the Ocean to the Entrails of a *Whale*. There it is, that, buried to the World and it's flattering false Hopes, he learns for the first time to live to God: There it is, that, lost to himself, he learns, by seeking God, to find himself: There, in a word, that he first returns to God with the Sighs of a cordial Repentance: *When my Soul was in Distress within me, then it was that I remember'd our Lord, says*

* *Jonah.*
ii.

He-himself. * Truly then may we say with St. Gregory, that Tribulations are Blessings sent us from *Heaven* to conduct us thither. " Nothing of all these, *says the Holy Father,* " is sent us with destructive Intent, but " with the ineffably merciful Design that we " may improve them to our Advantage."

Ah Beloved, sinful Christians! Is not the Conduct of God to *Jonah* the very same to You when he visits you with Tribulations? Whither does the Almighty direct your Steps? Say: Is it not to a blessed Eternity? To an endless Paradise? And whither do You, miserably blind Mortals, steer your Course? Ah! Is it not through a dangerous laborious Gulph of Lusts and Usuries and Frauds and Debaucheries

baucheries and Impieties, that you are sailing unconcern'd to the infernal Abyss? Ah! shall God then, forgetful of his tender Mercies, amuse your Frenzy with favourable Gales which may conduct you, drunk as you are with Vices Vanities and Dissipation, to the Perdition you are steering to? Or if, to turn your Course from sure Destruction to the eternal Harbour of Felicity, he wakes you to your Safety with Storms of Tribulation and drives you back from Ruin with some heavy Tempest of temporal Pains, Afflictions, Infamy, or Disappointments; can you deny it to be gracious Effect of bountiful Severity, a Rigour of saving Mercy? Yes, yes: Own we must with St. *Augustin*, that, "when God exerts his Scourge in this Life, his Punishments are not as yet *Damnation*; but, on the Reverse, a Caution against it." What, what is this Fit of Sickness, that Disgrace, that other Disappointment, but a merciful Tempest raised by the Anger of your compassionate God? A severe Tempest is this Statute of Bankruptcy which has reduced You to Indigence, O fraudulent Trader. That Stroke of undermining Treachery which has banish'd You from the Graces of your Sovereign, O ambitious Courtier, is a rigorous Storm. An insupportable Storm to You, O Miser, is the Loss of that Sum lent out upon Usury, the

D 2

Beggary

Beggary this Fire has reduced you to; the infamous Want to which this Mule^t has sentenced you. Dreadful is the Tempest of this blasting Distemper, to your Beauty, O Self-Idolizers! Of this Dropsy, to You, O Gluttons! Of this Stone, this Gout, this Palsy, to You, O Lechers! And O the dreadful Hurricane with which the Loss of this darling Infant, the Death of that Friend, the Advancement of this other Rival, shakes every Power of your Souls, disjoins Life, and jumbles in one rude wild Confusion your Senses Passions, Will and Intellects! Every Catastrophe, in short, nay every Accident in Life which runs counter to your Inclinations, is a rude Tempest to your Senses, which you know not how to support. But ah! why? If all of Them are but so many merciful Means to restore you to Salvation; ought you not to embrace them with Joy and gratefully to thank the all-gracious Author of them?

But "What, you'll cry! We rejoice,
 "when God punishes us? We return
 "him Thanks for tormenting us? Could
 "not God then have won us over to his
 "Will by milder Measures? Why could
 "he not, as heretofore He did our Fathers,*
 "carry us (like a Nurse of Ephraim) in
 "his Arms; and cure us so gently, as that
 "we might not know He cured us? In a
 "word,

* Hosea
 xi.

“ word, Instead of urging us with Fire
“ and Steel, might he not have allured us
“ with Caresses, according to his Promise, * * *Ibid.*
“ *I will draw them with the Bands of*
“ *Love; and I will be to them as lifting*
“ *up the Yoke?* Had he lifted up the Yoke
“ from touching our Shoulders; then, then
“ indeed we must have been wretchedly
“ ungrateful not to thank him. But shall
“ we thank him for loading us with One
“ we cannot Bare?” Hold, unthinking
Mortals, Hold! What did not your gracious
Lord do to prove to you that *his Yoke*
is sweet and his Burden Light? Nay
what did he omit, to render that Yoke
(light and sweet as It was from the Begin-
ning) imperceptible to You? To my last
Discourse I appeal, for the Much which
He did to win you to himself by En-
dearments. But if every Gentle Means
loses all it's Virtue, thro' the Abuses of
it in a Patient; if indulgent Remedies
serve only to forward a Gangrene; is it
not Mercy in the Physician to stop the
growing Mischief with Fire and Steel?
What tho' the Incision, which immediate
Danger makes necessary, draw from the
excruciated Sufferer, while actually under
Cure, some Groans, some Tears, some
Shrieks of Anguish; will he not have Rea-
son, when the Cure is compleated, to bless
the Hands which tormented him? Say
then,

then, O Sinners: If your Perversity render'd ineffectual all the merciful tender Methods by which God endeavour'd to restore You to a State of perfect Spiritual Health; was it not infinit Mercy in God to obviate an eternal Mortification, by rougher Remedies? "God, *say You*, could "draw you to himself by milder Methods?" Ah! of all the mild Methods he has made use of; Of all his Gifts, His Natural and Supernatural Benefits heap'd upon you; his Miracles, his Doctrins, his Death and Passion, his Sacraments, his Graces, his Inspirations, his Holy Word deposited in the sacred Scriptures, or extracted into Apostolic Sermons Devout Lectures, and pious Conversations: In a word of all his untold Indulgences, What-One can you point-out to me, which has yet met with the desired Effect, It was capable of producing? What has not been said, what has not been done by Him of indulgent? What is not daily said and done by his Ministers, to wean Mankind by gentle Means from Luxury, Vanities, Intemperance, Injustices and Lusts and all the innumerable Disorders with which the whole World is over-run and sullied? Nevertheless, are those Disorders at an End? Are they so much as diminish'd? But let us speak plain: Do they not daily encrease? Surely then if God has not pass'd an irrevocable

vocable Decree of Damnation against You, O Sinners; Surely if He has yet one Ray of Mercy left for you, your Good requires him to exert more vigorous Methods to draw you with Vehemence from the Ruin you are so obstinately wedded-to. Vain were all Counsels, Maxims, vain all Examples to persuade this Youth to a little more Piety, a little less Libertinage, Insolence, and lawless Freedom, while Vigour boil'd fervent through his Veins: A slow, consuming Hectic has damp'd his daring Spirits; and now how sober, regular and pious is He grown! To little Purpose was it, to preach to that Young Lady, to moderate her Vanity, to renounce the Pride of Dress, to lay aside the gay ensnaring Airs which fill'd her Hours, and tended only to the raising in her unwary Admirers the base ungenerous Project of her Ruin; till that corrosive Malady, which often proves an Enemy implacable to Beauty, disfiguring her Face, restored her Soul to all it's former Excellence: And now how modest, how composed and how devout is she become! O precious Tribulation! How necessary ar't not Thou to bring Sinners to a Sense of Themselves? And yet, O Sinners, it is your Perversity which reduces God to this hard Dilemma of either giving you up to Perdition or of recalling you from it by Tribulations. Justly therefore
might

might *Tertullian* say, " O thrice happy the
 " Servant, whose Master urges him to
 " Amendment, and loves him too well
 " to deceive him by the Diffimulation of
 " his Faults! " But----

" II. All this is true, *says some Penitent*
 " *Sinner*. I make no Doubt, but that the
 " Stripes with which the Almighty forces
 " Sinners back to him are so many benevo-
 " lent Effects of saving Rigour. I believe,
 " with *St. Augustin*, that they are the Scour-
 " ges of our merciful God *correcting for a*
 " *Time, that he may not be obliged to damn*
 " *for Eternity*. Nevertheless the Part of
 " Justice, *methinks*, should require him to
 " use Me with less Rigour, who am re-
 " turn'd to my Duty. That He should
 " chastise me, while Revolting from him ;
 " I could have no room to complain : But
 " must own with *St. Bernard* that *his*
 " *Scourges were Stripes of Mercy* ; and that
 " *he chastised me because he loved me*. But,
 " when, grown sensible of my Guilt, I re-
 " turn all penitent to his Arms, why should
 " he not, like the Good Father of the Pro-
 " digal Son, meet me with Caresses and re-
 " pay with Effects of amorous Tenderneſs
 " my Tears of Compunction? " So then,
 Christians, You did Sin? " Yes : But I re-
 " pent'd of it." You repented ; it is true :
 And it is well you did repent. But still it
 is

is true that you sinn'd: And with what Face then can you, who have sinn'd, murmur at suffering for having sinn'd? See you not, that, while you are endeavouring to prove that Tribulations are not a Matter of Necessity for you, You prove them at least to be Matter of Debt? The very Example of the Prodigal Son may suffice to convince you. Opprest by the Weight of Woes his Misconduct had loaded him with, he resolves to return back and seek a more comfortable Situation in his Native Abode. Here Repentance begins: And how does it proceed? Why---- loaded with Self-detestation, Horror of his Faults and every Sting of Remorse, he undertakes the long and laborious Journey in penurious Circumstance, and courts all the Hardships of traveling, Hunger, Fatigue, and Cold and Pain, to merit the Blessing he wish'd to obtain of a tender Parent's Caresses. He met it in fact at last. But the Exstatic Joy of the Paternal Embraces which received him were after all the final Premium of the painful Penance He underwent to obtain them. The Good-Father then did receive his penitent Son with Joy to his Arms, and, mindful no more of his Revolt, rewarded his Return? Yes. And thus, O Penitent Christians, thus, you may depend upon it, your Divine Indulgent Parent will receive You also into his eternal Mansions:

But not till, like the Prodigal Son, you have endured and surmounted all the Tribulations and Miseries which your Pilgrimage in this Life is strew'd with, and which are the Debt you contracted by removing yourselves to such a Distance from his Parental Arms.

Nor can I, in reality, conceive how, under the amending Stripes of God, a Penitent can complain; when he considers that That infinitely injured God could justly have punish'd him eternally and mercifully would not. Should a Malefactor whose Sentence of Death is changed, by the Clemency of his Sovereign, into the milder Punishment of Banishment or a Prison, murmur and accuse his Prince of Cruelty; could you hear him with any Patience?

“ Wretch! (*would you not answer*) a Gibbet
 “ was thy Due: And by the Clemency
 “ of thy Prince Thou art still in the
 “ World. Thy Offences call'd aloud for
 “ more than one public Execution: The
 “ Death of thy Body and the Death of thy
 “ Reputation would scarce suffice to expiate
 “ thy Guilt: By one Act of Grace thy
 “ Sovereign has reprieved thee from Both:
 “ And has't thou still the Insolence to
 “ murmur, still the Ingratitude to rage
 “ against the tender Hand which has
 “ spared Thee? Ah Christian Penitents!
 Why not reason thus on What passes
 between

between GOD and You? His infinit Goodness changes into this Sicknefs, that Loss, this Persecution, that Poverty, that Disappointment, that other Pain, the eternal Prison of the Damn'd. You have multiplied Sins upon Sins, heap'd Iniquity upon Iniquity: Allcry aloud against You: Vengeance! *Hell?* Damnation! Eternal Misery! GOD nevertheless mercifully contents himself with so slight a Revenge as a little temporal Tribulation: And can you be so ungrateful, so senselessly ungrateful, as to shrink at it? Ah! for Shame, break once for all with that Self-Love which so intoxicates you; and seriously look back, O Penitent Sinners, on the Sins of your past ill-conducted Life, and the Stripes of your amending GOD will appear to you, not Scourges but Caresses: You will cry out in consoling Raptures of Gratitude with *St. Gregory*: "These, These are not Stripes but Caresses, by whrch with a little bodily Pain, we may purify our Spirit from the Stains it contracted from the Sensuality of the Flesh." And it is even so, Dearly Beloved Auditors. The Soul which, dissolved in sincere Contrition, keeps it's afflicted Imagination fix'd on the black Ingratitude of former Offences with which it insulted GOD, is incapable of groaning under his chastening Stripes. All it's Sighs, All it's Tears, All it's Anguish and Grief are spent, not on the Evils

which oppresses It, but on the Sins by which It deserve them. The sad Remembrance of the infinit eternal Love which It so long treated with Contempt, of the Great and Good God whom It insulted, of the innumerable Mercies It abused, shew the Soul to itself in so black a Deformity, that It regards the tender Resentments of the injured Deity as so many ravishing Sweets, and with unconquer'd Resignation, nay with Heroic Avidity, is disposed to swallow the most bitter Cups of Earthly Tribulations and Disappointments.

The Children of *Jacob* are sent by their aged Father into *Egypt* to purchase at any Cost a little Succour against the Famine which they groan'd under. Arrived at their Journey's End, who should they apply to but to their Brother *Joseph*, tho' unknown to them? However in *Joseph*, they find, no more a Brother, but a Prince. Prince *did I say?* I had almost said a Tyrant. All, kneeling in the moving Posture of Distress at the foot of his Throne, with indignant Eyes he first surveys them; then questions them with brow-beating Frowns; and then, spite of the most candid humble inoffensive Replies, commits them to the Horrors of a Dungeon, and has them loaded with Fetters. Judge you now, Beloved Audience, what must be the Stupifaction of our miserable Travellers at so strange

strange so severe so unexpected a Reception! What a sudden Tumult of every fluctuating Passion must not rise in the Breasts of All! What Execrations of the Minister's Cruelty! What Protestations of Innocence! What bitter Complaints of the Hardness of their Fate, of the Barbarity of their Treatment, of the Perversity of their Stars, nay of the Rigour of God in permitting them to suffer thus undeservedly!

Apropos! A melancholy Reflection, rises to their Aid, and keeps them from bursting with convulsive Anguish; reminding them (as it often happens in like Manner to Others in Time of Affliction) of the Cruelty of their Conduct, but thirteen Years before towards their Brother *Joseph*. Hence consciously looking Every-One on the Others with an Eye of self-condemning Reproach, they wring their Hands and cry-out.

" Ah wretched We! Deservedly do we
 " suffer these Things, because we have
 " sinn'd against our Brother, seeing the
 " Distress of his Soul, while he besought
 " and we heard not: Therefore, THERE-
 " FORE IS THIS TRIBULATION COME
 " UPON US. * Innocent are we All of the
 " Crimes laid to our Charge by the *Egyptian*
 " Minister; But too, too guilty are
 " we of having inhumanly sold our Brother
 " *Joseph*. *Joseph* thrown into the fatal
 " Cistern with a murderous Intent, *Joseph*
 " sold

* *Genesis*
 xlii.

On the First SUNDAY in LENT.

“ sold to the *Ismaelites* still cries out
 “ Vengeance against us too loudly not to
 “ stop the Ears of Mercy: And justly
 “ do We sue in vain for Pity to a
 “ Stranger, who had no Sense of Pity for
 “ our own Blood crying to us in the inof-
 “ fensive Voice of a Brother. ” Thus did
 Conpunction speak through the Lips of these
 Penitent Brethren, Penitent of the Crime
 committed against their Brother *Joseph*.
 Thus too through our Lips should Contri-
 tion speak our Sense of the Injuries We have
 offer'd to God. Ah! *Deservedly do We*
suffer These Things (We all may say) *be-*
cause we have sinn'd against our God. What
 is an Injury done to a Brother, but a mere
 Infantile Fault, compared with the Heinous-
 ness of insulting God? And shall not this
 Reflection then suffice to sweeten every Pain
 which may appease that God? Ah! Be-
 lieve me for once, *says St. Gregory*: “ Com-
 “ fort is of an easy Acquisition, if amidst
 “ our Scourges, our Temptations of Tri-
 “ bulation, we recall but to our Mind
 “ the Crimes by which we have merited
 “ them. ”

O Christian Penitents! That You suffer,
 I do not doubt: But then that You have
 sinn'd, I cannot doubt. Just is it then that
 you should now suffer, as it was unjust that
 You should ever sin. Does your Patrimony
 waste by swift Degrees? Does every affair
 you

you undertake meet with Disappointment? Has Death snatch'd-away the fondled Heir to all your Substance, That sprightly promising Youth, the Prop of all your earthly Hopes? Has Malice thrown you out of Favour with that powerful Great Man? Does the Gout, the Stone, the Palsy with Fetters of Anguish make you Prisoners in your own Homes? Does persecuting Envy make you Exiles in your Native Land? And is every Path you enter, every Course you steer, strew'd with melancholy Objects of Misery? Ah! Remember, you have sinn'd and must atone for it. Remember, that, rude and rugged as these Paths appear to You, It is through These you must pass to Glory, by discounting the false Pleasure of Those many sensual Steps you have formerly taken wide of God, and which your Passions represented to your cheated Imagination as strew'd with agreeable Flowers. Remember, that, as St. Paul says, * *if You* * Heb. xii. *be without Disciplin, whereof All are made Partakers, then you are spurious, and not legitimate Children.* O the dreadful Premise! O the more dreadful Consequence! So then You must either submit to the Stripes which are the common Portion in this Life of all the legitimate Children of God, or be forever excluded from a Part in their Inheritance in Heaven.

“ sold to the *Ismaelites* still cries out
 “ Vengeance against us too loudly not to
 “ stop the Ears of Mercy: And justly
 “ do We sue in vain for Pity to a
 “ Stranger, who had no Sense of Pity for
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III. Be all this subscribed to for infallible Truth. " Still, *Some suffering Saint might*
 " *be tempted to say,* Still might Almighty
 " Mercy relax a little from the Rigour of
 " his Treatment with regard to Me, who,
 " Thanks to his all-conquering Mercy, can-
 " not accuse myself of ever having forfeited
 " the Grace He vouchsafed to bestow on
 " me. " O Fortunate Soul, thus qual-
 lified to speak in such an enviable Stile! Ah
 where is thy Abode? Where dost thou
 conceal thyself? Were ar't Thou to be
 found? Ah! make thy Appearance: Shew
 thyself to my wishful Eyes, that I may
 gaze on thee with pious Envy and in an Ex-
 tacy of Gladness shew thee to Heaven, to
 the World, and chiefly to the Christians
 who now hear me. O Blessed! Ten-thou-
 sand times thrice Blessed Soul! O Soul be-
 yond all earthly Utterance blessed, thus to
 contain in an unspotted Innocence all the
 Sweet Fruits of JESU's Death and Passion!
 But O happy priviledged Soul (if Such a
 One exist among mere Mortals!) Why should
 it seem hard to Thee, so like thy God in
 Sanctity of Manners, to be even like him
 in a Life of Sufferance? " Alas He scourges
 " me (*say you?*) with too severe a Hand;
 " and without any Respit or Abatement
 " discharges all the Weight of his relent-
 " less Scourges upon me. " Ah faint and
 feeble Innocence! What Weight, what
 Smart

Smart can be annex'd to the affectionate
Corrections of excessive Love? What can'st
Thou have to fear from that fond Arm
which drew Thee out of Nothing, wrought
a World for Thee, snatch'd Thee from gaping
Sin, shut-up from Thee every Avenue of
Hell, and keep open for Thee the Gate of
his own blisful Kingdom? What can'st
Thou apprehend from Hands wounded for
Thee, distilling Blood for Thee, nail'd to a
shameful painful Cross for Thee, and still
open to succour and receive Thee? Can
those Hands load Thee with Temptations too
heavy to bear, which suffer not Any to be
tempted beyond their Strength? " But he
" conducts me through Paths quite over-grown
" with Briars and Thorns " Is there ne-
vertheless one of those Thorns which is not
tinged, is not soak'd, with his Blood? If He
presents you with the bitter Cup of earthly
Afflictions and plies you with Gall and
Vinegar; Ah! why do you forget, that He
is your Saviour who presents that Potion to
You; that Saviour, who first drank deeply
of it himself before he gave you a faint Taste
of it, who drank of it out of pure Love for
You, who drank of it to teach You the Love
of earthly Sufferings, that he might lead
you enamour'd with Substantial Joys to
that Kingdom where alone they are incen-
ter'd? Ah! think wisely once for all, and
you will think with the Venerable *Cas-*

Jan. “ Trifling are the worst of Woes we
 “ have to endure in this Life, if We do but
 “ reflect on the bitter bitter Draught of Sor-
 “ rows, which He drank on a Cross, who
 “ now invites Us to a Crown. ”

If the Tribulations, O Christian Inno-
 cents, which seem to You so irksome, came
 upon you from Enemies, from Hands un-
 known or Suspect; there might be some Ex-
 cuse for your Reluctance to bear them. Where-
 as, whatever secondary Instruments He may
 think fit to make use of, the Sovereign Source
 of these Blessings is God himself, your Fa-
 ther, the best of Fathers, the tenderest the
 most Affectionate of Parents: A Father, who
 gave you all you enjoy on Earth, and pre-
 pares for you all you can hope for in Hea-
 ven. Is all then which he has done and is
 ready to do too little to convince you, that,
 if he causes you a little Smart, it is all for
 Love of you, all for your Good? Have not
 You like Reason with the enlighten'd St. *Au-*
gustin to say: “ O the Goodness of our
 “ Divine Father! Let him storm as he
 “ please, still is he our Father: Let him
 “ scourge us, let him afflict us, let him
 “ crush us, still does he prove a Father? ”
 The few Tears with which he condescended
 to bathe the Sepulchre of *Lazarus* were so
 sufficient a Proof of the Love he had for
 him, that the very Populace could cry out:

* St. *John* Behold how He loved him! * And shall so
 xi. much

much precious Blood, as he has shed for You, not finish to convince you how greatly He loves You? Nay shall not the very Tribulations, with which He tries you, more than suffice to remove from you every Doubt of the Excess of his Love for You? Especially when his Apostle assures you that they are the standard Proofs of his saving Affection for his Elect. HE SCOURGES EVERY CHILD, *says St. Paul* * “ Ah! What Children does He scourge, *says the apostolish’d St. Augustin?* What Children? Those Children who are dearest to him: Those Children whom He loves with most tender Affection: Those Children for whom he most anxiously prepares eternal Advantages. *Every Child whom he receiveth.*” In a word the ELECT. “ Ah! what Children, *says He again?* --- Why --- Among the Rest that beloved Son, *in whom he was well pleased,* the necessary Object of his eternal Love, his only-begotten Son, his impeccable, innocent Son, his Son Jesus.... Yes, Christians; His only Son, the Only-One without Sin, but not his Only-One in Exemption from Pain.” If then, Christians, you have a Certainty, that God loves you; that it is He who sends you the Pains you feel; that He sends them for your Advantage; and that, in sending them, He does you no less an Honour than putting

* Hebrews
xii.

you upon a Level with his Only-begotten ; can you deny, that every Groan you fetch, every the least Complaint, is a shameful Want-of Acknowledgment to God?

But ! What am I saying ? After all, Who can be so pitiless as even barely to think of requiring Sufferers to Stifle their Groans ? The Anguish, which, wholly pent-up in a human Breast, has no Vent through the Senses, is too insupportable for Life to subsist long under it : And to separate from Afflictions the Solace of Lamentation is robbing the Afflicted of every Relief. Well then : Be it e'en allow'd to the Wretched to bemoan their Condition. But ah dearest Christian Sufferers ! Never permit your Afflictions so to bereave you of Discretion as to prostitute your Complaints where they are neither sure to move Compassion nor likely to procure Redress. And see you not that it would be wasting your Sighs and spending your Spirits in vain, to breath-out your Grievances any-where else but at the Feet of your crucified Lord, who alone is ready and able to relieve you ? But what Advice am I giving ? Strange Inadvertence ! O my suffering Love ! O my dear wounded bleeding agonizing Saviour ! Is it possible, that, in thy Presence, in Sight of thy Pangs, We can even feel the Weight of our inferior Woes ? In Sight of such and so many Wounds and Sores and Rents and Bruises
and

and Injuries and Insults, can We be so delicate as to repine at the trivial Evils which befall us? Is there in this or Gratitude, or Justice? Or Love for Thee, or for Ourselves?

O Christian Innocents then! To the Presence of this crucified Redeemer let me cite you All with all your Load of Woes. Compare your Pains with his, your Wounds with his, your Ignominy with his, your Blood with his: And then, in the Name of Justice, if the Balance weighs on your sides, even give a Loose to Sighs, Complaints and Discontents. More Innocent than Him I cannot think you: Yet, if your Ill-Treatment out-weighs his; We'll strike the Balance. But, if I look on Him; I behold him naked: Ah! say: Has Poverty yet vented all it's Rage on you and urged you to a like Extreme? ---- But! I behold him not only naked but all Wounds and Sores and Bruizes from Head to Foot: Say, have Sickness, Falls, or Stripes or other Accidents yet handled you so roughly? ---- But! I survey Him nail'd pendent on an infamous Tree between two Thieves: Say, has Persecution push'd You as yet to such a shameful painful End? Are the Affronts or Injuries or Insults you are compell'd to put-up-with equal in Number Weight or Measure to his opprobrious Treatment? Ah! Why then, if they are not, do you not blush at
your

your past Delicacy? Why does not a holy
 Emulation spur you forward after him,
 and force you Every-One, in Reparation of
 that Delicacy, to cry-out eagerly with
 DAVID: "Behold, O Lord, *I am prepared*
 " *for thy Scourges?* No more, Sweet Lord,
 " shall thy paternal Scourges meet with
 " Reluctance in my Affections. No, no:
 " In proof of my Fidelity to thee; be-
 " hold me, not only ready, but desirous
 " to receive the Stripes. Depart from me,
 " seditious Rebel Thoughts, depart: In
 " vain shall you henceforth murmur and
 " repine; resolved is this Heart, and *I am*
 " *prepared for Scourges.* No more let it
 " be said, that my Saviour courted an ex-
 " cruciating Hunger with a Fast of Forty
 " Days from every Food and every earthly
 " Comfort; and I repine at the Denial of
 " Superfluities, and Luxury during the
 " like Space. Shall Christ, for my sake, have
 " suffer'd the rude Insults of diabolic Rage;
 " and, trampling on the Soft Allurements of
 " a deceitful World, have embraced with Joy
 " a naked poor inglorious Life concluded
 " with a painful ignominious Death; and
 " I, breathing nothing but temporal Ea-
 " joyment and fallacious Ease, shrink at
 " the moderate Share he deigns to give me
 " in his Sufferings? No, no; rebellious
 " Nature, no: *I am prepared for the tender*
 " *Scourges* of my God: And never shalt
 " Thou

“ Thou henceforth make me doubt but
“ that, what seems to Thee Severity, is
“ pure excess of Love in God for Thee
“ his useless Creature. He, my Soul, is
“ bent on saving thee, on leading thee to
“ Paradise: And ill does it become Thee
“ to prescribe the Way by which He shall
“ conduct thee thither. Behold me, O my
“ God, behold me ready nay anxious for
“ thy *Heaven*. Behold me *prepared for*
“ *thy Scourges*. Conduct me through what-
“ ever Path Thou list; behold, I follow.
“ Let it be thick with Briars to tear me
“ Piece-meal; strew it, line it, with the
“ acutest Thorns: That precious Blood
“ of Thine, with which thou has’t soften’d
“ them, shall blunt their Edge to me:
“ Happy, thrice happy, if by their Means
“ I may at last arrive at the eternal Glory
“ to which They lead.”

O dearly Beloved Christians! Thus would
You reason all, if You but gave your Reason
It’s due Superiority over Prejudice and Pas-
sion. But, alas, you see not through the
Eyes of your Reason; and therefore, hood-
wink’d by your Senses, you look with
the lived Eyes of Envy on Every-One who,
to outward Appearance, seems but to be
happy and at Ease; and murmur at your
Destiny for every little Affliction which hap-
pens to You. Whereas, O! how different
would the Emotions of your Souls be;
would

would you but carry your Reflections a little beyond the Bounds you confine them to. The light and momentary Tribulations, which now seem to You so insupportable, are they not pregnant with eternal Pleasures? What then have you to do with those Tears which roll so plentiful along your Cheeks? What means that sullen Melancholly settled on your Brow? What Cause gives Birth to those Heart-rending Sobs which rise so ready in every contradicting Circumstance? Know you the deep Designs of all-disposing Providence? Why then repine at passing Evils, which shall one day excite the reasonable Envy of Those whom now with misplaced Jealousy You mistake for happy; and for which you will find Cause eternally to thank and praise and bless your gracious God, who, out of his boundless Bounty, deigns to think you worthy of these Proofs of his excessive Love?

Notorious to you All, Beloved Auditors, are the Adventures of the ancient Patriarch *Joseph*. As yet a tender Youth, his Brethren, animated by Jealousy, consult the Means to rid themselves of him; and completing the unnatural Resolution with a precipitate Execution they strip him of his Garments and sell him to a Band of *Ismaelites*. O! Who can describe, so well as conceive, the Anguish of the persecuted Youth under his afflicting Circumstance?

Who

Who can number the Tears he shed to mollify the flinted Hearts of his inhuman Brethren? The Vows he offer to *Heaven* to draw down his Deliverance? How does he prostrern himself first to One then to Another of the Tyrant Brothers, cling to their Knees in a Flood of Tears; wring his Hands; call on the Name of their common Father; plead the Ties of their common Blood; ask Pardon; promise Submission; conjure the milder *Ismaelites* to renounce their Pretensions; conjure his Brethren to renounce their Hatred; conjure *Heaven* to mollify their Hearts! What does he not say? What does he not do? What does He not try to avert the guilty Injury offer'd to him? But ah! He would have spared all this fruitless Labour; He would have spared all this groundless Anguish; had but one prophetic Thought help'd him to a Foresight of what his present Affliction was big with. Ah *Joseph*! Simple Childish *Joseph*! Do'st thou know what thou ar't weeping for? Do'st thou know what thou ar't sueing for? Unfortunate would thy Petition have been, if *Heaven* condescended to it. For had'st thou but seen what the dreaded Exile was to end in, Thyself would have wept only with Compassion on thy Weakness in grieving at it. Leave then, leave thy cruel Brethren to their Perversity. Little do they think, that, selling thee to slavery they are purchasing

chasing for thee a Diadem. Away, away with those Tears which would rob thee of Power Dignity and Empire. Leave them all and follow chearfully whither merciful Providence leads. Know and be assured, however rugged and unpleasant the Road may appear, it is safe and happy traveling where God is the Conductor.

What the Spirit of Prophecy might have said to *Joseph*, Faith, unerring Faith says daily to Every-One of You. O the spacious Kingdom of exstatic Bliss! O the resplendent Crown of interminable Glory promised to afflicted Fortitude, in numberless Passages of Holy-Writ! Enough is it to say that nothing less than *Heaven* is the promised Reward. And still shall we find Difficulty not only to suffer with Joy, but even to suffer with Patience? Still shall we shew Horror and Repugnance for those trivial Temptations of Tribulations, with which our eternal all-gracious Parent vouchsafes to try us and fit us for his Glory, as knowing that we never shall attain to it without them? Nay still shall we not only shrink at the Scourges of our tender Divine Parent, but even flee every voluntary Mortification and Self-denial, and fly in the Face of God's Church whenever she prescribes us either?

“ But could not God (*you'll say*) secure
 “ *Heaven* to us at a cheaper Rate? Could
 “ not

“ not He find Means to save us, more easy
 “ to the Sense, more grateful to our Inclina-
 “ tions? ” Doubtless, He could have found
 such: But he has not. And with what Au-
 thority or Arrogance shall reptil Man
 presume to ask him, why he did not? The
 eternal Father could have found them for
 his beloved, only, guiltless Son: And yet he
 left him subject to Cold, to Hunger, to Pain,
 to Infamy to Death and every external Temptation,
 and made it necessary *for Christ to suffer and so to enter into his Glory.* * What Injury then * *St. Luke*
 or Hardship have we to complain of, in *xxiv.*
 that the same eternal Father should make
 our Condition echo to that of his Divine
 Son with a like Necessity, and require that
We also, by many Tribulations, should enter into the Kingdom of God? † Horrid perversity! † *Mat. xiv.*
 The Son of GOD shall have wrought the
 most stupendous of all Miracles in the
 Hypostatic Union of his Divine Nature
 with ours, merely for the sake of suffering
 for us: And We shall arrogantly presume
 to want Miracles to exempt us from suf-
 fering for our Benefit? Yet O Christians;
 is that Miracle at your own Disposal, and
 it consists in no more than This: Wisely
 prevent your Sufferings with the Desire of
 Suffering, and you may blunt the Edge of
 them. But on the contrary to pray God
 not to afflict you, would be in You, O
 G 2 Sinners,

Sinners, the praying him to give you up a Prey to *Satan*: In You, O Penitents, it would be soliciting the eternal Punishments which he thereby saves you from: In you, O Just, it would be importuning your Divine Parent to love you with less Tenderneſs, with a leſſer Degree of Affection: And in all of You, O dear loved Chriſtians who hear me, it would be practically beſeeching God to diminiſh your eternal Blifs; to eclipse, perhaps, one Half of your future Glory. Ah! Believe me: If you love God never ask him ſuch a Favour. Believe me: If God loves you intently he will never grant it. We muſt then in this Life ſuffer to the End, and ſuffer without Comfort? Yes, we muſt. We have God's gracious Promiſe: Thanks to him for it. *The World ſhall rejoice, but you ſhall be made ſad.* * Yet, Chriſtians, *I ſay again*, all the Comfort neceſſary is in your own Reach. Ah! One Spark of pure Love for God: One Spark of juſt Love for Yourſelves; *and your Sorrow ſhall be turn'd into Joy.* Love but God above all things: Love yourſelves enough to aſpire to the Enjoyment of him; and I pronounce you Triumphant over every Tribulation. *Pray that you enter not into internal Temptation; watch that you enter not into thoſe external Temptations* which are in League with your corrupt Nature, and manfully ſuffer the ſame *Spirit* of Divine Love to lead

* St. John
xvi.

lead you to the Encounter of Temptations of Tribulation, *by which Jesus was led into the Desert to be tempted by them*; and, by the Assistance of God's Grace, you shall share in his Victory, whose Example you endeavour to imitate. And that you may be the better prepared for the Sufferings which God shall please to send you, inure yourselves to the Love of suffering by previous Mortification and Penance. Instead of studiously seeking Means and Excuses to waive the Mortification and Self-denial, which your Holy Mother the Church prescribes to you in this Holy Penitential Time of *Lent*; embrace them with Joy practice them with Fervor, and improve them with supererogating Ingenuity. A little sincere Love for God and yourselves will render the Task not only easy but delightful. It is your present as well as future Interest to have that Love. "It is your Interest to Love: *says St. Augustin.* For no Labours are burdensome to Lovers, but on the contrary afford Delight." It is even so, Christians: *Love is strong as Death*, and nothing is so difficult which Love cannot surmount. O! How sweet must it not be to obey and suffer out of Sympathy. A darling Babe is not a lighter Burden to the fond Mother who gives it Suck than the most heavy Grievance in this Life to him who

who passionately loves his God and his own Soul. Love God then, Christian Souls: Once more, ere I conclude, *I say*: Love God and love yourselves; and the acutest Pains, the sharpest Tribulations, shall yield you Comfort even in this Life, and work you an eternal Crown of never ending Bliss and Glory in the Life to come. Which I beseech God, &c. *In the Name, &c.*

First INDICATION of the PASSION.

IN Grief, when arrived to the degree of Excess, Revered Auditors, there appears a Certain Something of such majestic Solemnity which All who behold must observe, tho' None can find Terms or Colours to describe it. I can only say, that it commands or rather forces Respect, and with irresistible Sway reigns despotic Sovereign over the most obdurate Hearts. It has all the Eloquence of the most pathetic Words without the Help of Expression, and every Prerogative of Power, in it's utmost Impotence. It melts Tyranny into Tenderness, Cruelty into Compassion, and Inhumanity into sympathetic Mercy. In a word, Sole Substitute of Providence in time of Need, it dignifies Distress with a kind of Arbitrary Power over the Means of Relief: Witness an Instance

Instance which History affords us. The Emperor *Domitian*, no matter how, incurr'd the implacable Hatred of the People of *Rome*: A Hatred which Nothing less would suffice to satiate than the Massacry of the hated Sovereign. The Emperor Dead, judge You whether, or not, They who lost all Respect for him, while living and in actual Possession of Sovereign Authority, were capable of observing any Respect for the Empress his Widow, whose Imperial Authority expired with the Life of her Imperial Lord. And yet what the Eminence of her Station could not, the Dignity of her Sorrow obtain'd. In this melancholy Circumstance She appears in the Senate and demands Satisfaction and Justice for the barbarous Deed. The solemn Majesty of her Appearance, which unborrow'd from the Grandeur of her Birth and elevated Condition, ow'd all it's Efficacy to magnanimous Distress, carried with it a venerable Dejection; such a Dejection as created not only Pity but Reverence, not only sympathetic Pain but irresistible Awe in her Beholders. The uninvited Tears, which, flowing from a Sea of Sorrow in her Breast, roll'd, like the Steams of a rapid Torrent, down her distressful Cheeks, were sincere Interpreters of her energetic Silence; and the thick-rising Sobs which for some time forbid her Voice it's Utterance, far more insinuat-
ing

ing than all the Eloquence of loud-tongued Lamentations, pierced to the Heart of every fullen Senator and previously secured to her the Boon She had to crave, ere She could summon Words to ask it. As soon however as conquer'd Anguish recoil's within her, to make way for Expressions; her Soul, divided amidst the tumultuous Passions of Love and Hatred, Rage and Pity, Revenge and Tenderness, breathes-forth, in broken unconnected Accents, the Purport of her scarcely half-form'd Wishes. Such the Dilemma of a distracted Matron, when unnaturally widow'd of the tender Husband She valued as her Life and widow'd by the inhuman Parricide of her own Children whom She prizes more than Life: Such the disconsolate Situation of our Empress. All then She demands, when Grief and Cruelty permit her to express her Demands, is the Liberty to gather-up the scatter'd Remains of her butcher'd Lord, yet nakedly exposed in the common Streets to all the rude Insults of a merciless Populace, that She may give them an honourable Burial.---- And how could so meek so merciful so modest so melting a Petition of guiltless Dignity in the deepest Distress possibly meet with a Refusal even from Savages? ---- In reality it met with none ---- Her Request then obtain'd as soon as signified, She sends out her Domestics through the Town respectfully to take-up the disfigured Members

Members of mangled Majesty, wherever dispersed; and, thus rescued from riotous Irreverence, She causes them to be placed on the Summit of the *Capitol*, the most conspicuous Place in all *Rome*, that in view of this Spectacle of daring Cruelty, Every Accomplice in the Bloody Fact, might shrink at the black Treason, and conceive a just Horror of the Enormity of his Guilt.

“ I will try, *She cries*, if perchance I may
“ not, by this Means, render the Image of
“ their Barbarity for ever present to their
“ Eyes; that their tortured Imagination
“ may never cease to keep their Consciences
“ awake to penitential Remorse: In a word,
“ that, never forgetting the Exorbitance of
“ their Crime, they may incessantly pre-
“ serve, in this Monument of my Grief,
“ the racking Sting of their own Guilt and
“ Infamy.”

The Church, Beloved, is now in deep Mourning on a like afflicting Occasion. The Cause of her just Affliction is such as renders her Distress more infinitely more affecting than that of any Mortal ever was or can be. Her Divine Spouse has been assassinated, inhumanly assassinated; and You, O Christians, You and I among the rest have lent our Crimes to the bloody Parricide. It is true, that the unnatural Deed has been long since effected; and there are now almost eighteen Centuries, that She has been

widow'd of the Delight of her Soul. But as a Loss without Measure can deserve Nothing less than a Grief without End, the annual Reversion of a mournful Memorial is the least Tribute due to the Excess of her Woe. The Time of this Memorial is return'd, and the Cause of that mournful Dress She appears in at this sacred Time is the Renewal of the Horror She has ever retain'd for the outrageous Deicide. It is hard indeed to say which afflicts her the most, the Remembrance of injured Innocence, or the Sight of your Guilt. Her Love for her Divine Spouse calls aloud for the Punishment of so unnatural a Butchery, and yet the Love She still bears to You as her Children sues for Mercy on the Butchers. Thus torn, thus divided by contrasting Affections, what Remedy can be applied to her Griefs? To do however what is in my Power to afford her Relief, I purpose, on next *Good-Friday*, mentally to gather-up the sad Relics of the precious Body of her Divine Spouse, in a mournful Contemplation of his Passion; in which I shall go in Spirit to all the Places where he was ill-treated, and take-up, as I go on, as many of the precious Drops of his Blood as I may. At the *Pretorium* and other Places I shall collect the Treasures of sacred Flesh, which were torn from his blessed Frame: And when I have bathed them a little with your
Tears

Tears and my own from the prophane dirt which our Sins have thrown on them, I shall expose them to the View of all penitent Sinners; and shall endeavour to fix the Image of his mangled Body in your Imagination, that, resting ever present to your Memory, It may make way to every Heart which is not impenetrable, and remain there for Life. In short, my Purpose in so doing is, that Such as by mortal Sin have contributed to this Parricide, may, by having always before them the Object of their Crimes, conceive a just Horror of them, and never lose Sight of the Matter of an endless Contrition.

Such then of You, Christians, as are not afraid of breaking with Sin and *Satan*, endeavour to be present at the moving interesting Scene. Murmur not at the Labour; nor grudge for one Day to share in the dying Pains of Him who thought it not too much to die for you. And if the Thought of Sharing in his Pains should terrify your Delicacy, cheer-up your Self-Love with the Reflection on the Glory and Felicity which that Day's Meditation may cause you to share-in, with him, in the Kingdom of Heaven.





S E R M O N

ON THE

Second SUNDAY in L E N T.

St. MATTHW xvii. 4.

*Lord! It is good for us to be here: If
Thou wilt, Let us make here Three Ta-
bernacles, One for Thee, One for Moses
and One for Elias.*



I n my last Sermon I had an im-
potent Enemy to triumph over;
in This, Christians, I have a for-
midable Foe to encounter. If the
Tribulations of this Life are a Temptation,
as undoubtedly they are; They are also pro-
fitable to endure and easy to surmount:
And therefore may they, not only be
grappled-with, but coveted. But the Plea-
sures of this Life are Temptations of a very
different Kind, detrimental to the Spirit in
their very Nature, and extremely difficult to
conquer: Therefore ought they not only to
be

be resisted but shun'd. Temporal Afflictions are external Temptations; so are temporal Pleasures: But there is this great Difference between them. The Former are in perpetual War with our Passions; the Latter keep a treacherous Correspondence with them. The Former are the more easy to resist, as Yourself are naturally disposed to consider them as Enemies: The Latter are so much the more dangerous to encounter as there is no persuading you to apprehend any Enmity from them. The very first Advances of Tribulation You are so very watchful of your own Accord to keep wide-of, that there is little Cause to fear your ever being over-power'd by the Excesses of it: Whereas such is your Eagerness, not to conquer, but to court present Enjoyment, that, even when it flees from your Approaches, you endeavour to cut off it's Retreat; and with pusillanimous Meanness surrender to It at Discretion, without Fighting, nay without Parley. Therefore is there every Cause to fear your Ruin in it's remotest Advances. The Arrows which are foreseen either wound not all or wound not so deeply: But the Dart which is level'd in the Dark seldom fails to aim surely and to penetrate quite home. Tribulations are like generous Enemies who declare open War and march to the Attack in Battle Array; but earthly Pleasures are like those dastardly

daftardly Traitors who lurk in Ambush to convey Destruction in Disguife: *They prepare*, as the Pfalmist expreffes it, *They prepare their Arrows in the Quiver, that they may ſhoot at the Upright of Heart.* Thoſe tempt us only by attacking us from without; but Theſe, while They outwardly beſiege our Hearts by flow and cover'd Approaches, carry-on a traiterous Correſpondence with our ſenſual Appetites within, in order to ſurpriſe and betray us. The Vigorous Affaults of Thoſe, the more furiously they affail us, the more do they urge us to confirm or renew our Dependence upon God; but Theſe, by ſoothing us into an Inſenſibility of our Danger, wean us from every Dependence on God to make us abject Slaves to the World: Thoſe, in a word, by ſhewing us in our Littleneſs and Inſufficiency the Neceſſity of recurring to the Protection of the Divine Grace, bring us oftentimes back to an intimate Alliance with JESUS CHRIST; but Theſe by filling us with Self-Confidence and inebriating us with Preſumption block-up our Souls from every Application to Chriſt and his Grace. An Inſtance of Both, We have in the Apoſtles themſelves, The Diſciples with Jeſus in their Boat put out to Sea under Favour of a prosperous Gale of Wind: But no ſooner are they got high in the Ocean, than the Fair Weather, like all earthly Proſperity,
deſerting

deserting them, shews itself only a Decoy to the Horrors which succeed. A furious Tempest arises, the Billows swell, the adverse Winds blow hard, the Vessel bulges and the scared Apostles, really absent in Thought to Christ who was but seemingly asleep to them, tremble for their own Safety. Each acts his Part; and All with one Accord combine to exert their little Art, to baffle the rude Elements. But all in vain: The more they row and sweat and toil, the greater grows the Danger with the encreasing Storm: And They, mean-while, depending still upon their little Arts and Industry, forget the Heavenly Majesty they are freighted-with as much as if he was not with them, till their Distress augmenting with their Danger alarms them to their Safety, and shews them in their Impotence the Necessity of applying for Relief to Him alone who had the Power to afford it. Their Tribulation it was then which spur'd them to apply to him, with that famous *Lord save us we perish.* * In this Gospel, We find the same Disciples absorb'd in Raptures of temporal Delight at the Sight of our Lord's Transfiguration on the Mount: And what Effect does it work in them? Why,----instead of lifting their Souls in amorous Aspirations to that celestial Bliss of which their present sensitive Transports of Joy were but a faint Foretaste, It depresses

*St. Mark
viii.

presses their Spirits. to the Pleasures of the Earth, weighs them down with groveling Desires of continuing their present fleeting Satisfaction, and links their Affections to terrestrial Enjoyment: Insomuch that, forgetful of the nobler Pretensions they have to the permanent Felicity which attends them in Heaven, they consider as a greater Good the establishing their present Pleasure upon Earth. *Lord! It is good for us to be here.* Nay so strongly are they attach'd to the actual Enjoyment which transports their feeble Senses, that they are even for bringing Heaven to protract it, by offering to erect Tabernacles to the Honour of Christ and his Saints. *If Thou wilt let us make Three Tabernacles, One for Thee, One for Moses, and One for Elias.* Thus capable are the most innocent Enjoyments of this Life of making us lose Sight of the more solid Felicity of Heaven. But lose Sight *did I say?* Rather should I have said, they are capable of making every thing which is heavenly a Matter of Terror to us, as they did to the Apostles: Who, instead of rising from the Lethargy into which their transient Tranquillity had lull'd them, and soaring with Extacies of amorous Love to Heaven at the melodious Sound of the Divine Voice through the luminous Cloud, *fell upon their Face and were sore afraid.*

afraid. It is true their Pleasure was of the most innocent Sort; in-as-much as it owed all it's Being to the miraculous Unction of Heaven. But it was still earthly sensitive Pleasure, which they could not enjoy a Perpetuation of without renouncing the more substantial Pleasure of heavenly Bliss, which was to succeed it: And therefore tho' innocent it was dangerous and ill-judged to fix their Hearts to It. In fact, the Holy Ghost tells us, by the Mouth of St. *Mark*, in their Justification, that, desiring the Continuation of that dangerous tho' innocent Pleasure on the Mount, *they knew not what they said.**

*St. *Mark*
ix.

After what has been said then, Who can doubt, Christians, but that earthly Pleasures are of all external Temptations the most dangerous to Salvation, because of All the most treacherous, and not only always difficult to conquer but even detrimental to sustain, on account of the close Correspondence they keep-up with our Senses and sensual Appetites? After having then taken some Pains to arm you against the Attacks of temporal Tribulations, I should provide but slenderly for your Spiritual Safety, if I left you exposed to the lurking Enmity of earthly Pleasures. Give me leave then to put you on your Guard against these false and formidable (tho' feeble) Traitors to the Soul, by shewing you that all the Joys

of this Life are both formidable and feeble at once. They are formidable in their Friendship ; but extremely feeble in their Enmity. When they soothingly approach us, in the Guise of Friends, to gain Admittance into our Hearts ; then it is that they are the most to be dreaded: But when they keep aloof, and, by breaking-off all Intercourse with us, seem to declare open War with us ; then it is that they have less Power to hurt us. In short, what I mean to convince you of is,

I. That there is the greatest Danger in giving Earthly Pleasures Admittance into our Hearts : Because They are inconsistent with present Happiness and obstructive to future Felicity : *And*

II. That the great Art of rendering them useful is, to mistrust their Approaches and to renounce every internal Intercourse with them from the very Beginning.

“ Almighty Lord of Heaven and Earth,
 “ who has’t prepared for us a Kingdom
 “ of eternal infinit Delights transcending
 “ every Power of Sense on Earth to feel
 “ or to describe ! Permit us not to forfeit
 “ them for any sordid fleeting Pleasure of
 “ this Life. No : But since Thou has’t
 “ given us Souls too great by Nature to
 “ be fill’d with Aught but thy substantial
 “ Glory ; keep out of them whatever may
 “ obstruct the Plenitude of That. Make
 “ every

“ every transient Pleasure tasteless to us;
“ and restless as thou has’t made our Hearts
“ on Earth, vouchsafe to keep them so,
“ till they repose in Thee our only Hap-
“ piness and Rest.”

I. That the Pleasures of the Earth should tempt us it is no Wonder: And to shun the Temptation intirely, is absolutely impossible while we remain in this Flesh. Our very Existence is center’d in the mid’s of temporal Pleasures: Let us turn our Senses whither-ever we will pleasing Objects present themselves before us: Let us fix our Abode in the City or in the Desert, there will never be wanting Matter of Earthly Enjoyment to allure our Senses and flatter our Imagination with the Promise of mighty Pleasure, in order to gain Admittance in our Hearts. And here lies all the Danger. While we keep our Hearts free from every Attachment to Them, all the Objects around us can only tempt us externally but can never injure or endanger us. But if once we open our Hearts to them and give way to the flattering Sensations they endeavour to affect us with; Adieu to all our temporal Happiness: Adieu to our eternal Safety. Adieu to Peace and Innocence.

But what! Is not earthly Pleasure one kind of earthly Felicity? How then can earthly Pleasure exist without earthly Felicity? Ah

Christians! How? The Pleasures of the Earth are but the Appearance of Felicity, a mere Decoy to overthrow that Christian Peace which only can subsist in the immediate Union of the Soul with God. And if they did not put on the Appearance of Felicity, they would not be the Traitors they are. The Danger then lies in trusting to the false Appearances of Earthly Pleasures which carry ever with them the Obstruction of all solid Happiness even in this Life. Without Peace there is no Happiness and there are no Earthly Enjoyments capable of affording one Minute's Peace. Power, Sensual Delight, Vain Praises, and Sordid Lucre are the grand Pleasures which flatter Mankind with the Promise of Happiness, they have not to give.

Absalom was one melancholy Instance of this Truth. The gaudy Trappings of regal Authority present themselves to his cheated Imagination in the borrow'd Dress of Happiness. The Homage render'd to his Royal Parent, the splendid Palace, the gay Appearance of a numerous Court of Nobles, the sumptuous Entertainments, the beauteous Train of Concubines, the chosen Bands of Music, the Flattery, Obedience, and chearful Services of a whole populous Nation; All which seem the inseparable Attendants of the Throne: All smiling promise him, in the Possession of them, the endless Enjoyment

Enjoyment of unbounded Happiness. But ah Fond, unexperienced Youth! Trust not to the gay Illusion. The Happiness which Thou pursue'st is but a Phantom Rose, the surrounding Thorns of which are real, tho' Passion screens them from thy Observation. But! To what Purpose parley with a Man whose Senses are abandon'd to the Discretion of Sycophancy? The Traitor-Prospect flatters him, and He foolishly yields his Heart to it's Deceit. In a word, *Abshalom*, charm'd into Compliance, accepts the deluding Invitations of Sovereign Power, and parts with Peace with Honour, with Happiness and Life. O the Anxieties which now torment him! O the Tumults, which Fear and Hope, and Doubt and Daringness, raise in his hurried Mind! Nature with all the Eloquence of Blood exerts her Voice to shock his yet unhardened Heart; while bold Ambition labours to stagnate every Emotion of Remorse. Care now takes Place of calm Serenity; and every Incident which favours or obstructs the rash Pursuit, rends him alike between the rack-ing Thoughts of Probability and Incertainty. Gloomy Suspicion, black Enmity and peace-destroying Danger rob him of every Interval of Inaction which offers Rest. A Father dethroned, expell'd from his Metropolis, and persecuted even to Death by an unnatural Faction of his raising,

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raising, tortures his Conscience, stings his Soul and lodges a gnawing Viper in his Breast. A Father yet existing, yet living in the Hearts of the sounder Part of his People, a Fond Father basely injured and who one Day, by sudden turn of Fortune, may be able to punish the unnatural Rebellion, is a consuming Worm which robs even insolent Ambition of Content. No Matter, *Absalom* : No Matter, ambitious Youth. Thou has't gone too far now to make a safe Retreat. All must be hazarded, now all has been attempted. Even take Possession of the Royal City, e'en seize the Royal Concubines, and hazard a decisive Battle to rid thyself, in the Death of an obnoxious Parent, of every Obstacle to the Happiness Thou aspiest to. Who knows but that the Power which, at so much Cost of Peace, deceives thee in thy Pursuit of it, may over-pay thee in the Possession?

" But --- Possession! *methinks I hear him*
 " *cry in melancholy Soliloquy*, Possession!
 " Would I were sure of that! That would
 " repay me every Torture, the Attempt
 " has cost me. O that I never had attempted or that I might be sure of the desired Success! But Ah! Who can assure
 " me of Success? Who can assure me that
 " these unnatural Rebels, who basely second
 " my Ambition, will not as treacherously
 " betray the Son as they have done the
 " Father?

“ Father? O cursed, cursed Lust of Power!
“ O flattering false Ambition! O that I
“ had trusted less to thy deceitful Pro-
“ mises and never given thee Admittance
“ into this Heart! What Cares, What
“ Dangers, Difficulties, Hardships and Per-
“ plexities had I been still a Stranger to?
“ What tho’ I should usurp my Father’s
“ Crown; has he not yet an Army of
“ faithful Subjects at his Command to strip
“ me of it? What tho’ that Army be but
“ small; has he not yet the Voice of
“ Nature, Justice, Love and Gratitude.
“ and Pity to raise him daily fresh Re-
“ cruits? What tho’ I seize the present
“ Opportunity of my superior Forces to
“ hazard a decisive Battle? - If Fortune
“ should declare against me; lo! All my
“ towering Hopes are overthrown: And
“ if I gain the guilty Victory, can Royal
“ Power cancel Royal Guilt, or silence the
“ Blood of my assassinated Parent? Can all
“ the Charms of Monarchy stifle that ran-
“ corous Remorse, with which the yet un-
“ perpetrated Parricide already rends my
“ Soul and robs me of all Quiet? But, Hush
“ intruding Reason! Thou come’st too
“ late: Ambition must be gratified.” But
Ah the miserable ambitious Youth! Had
he but yielded to the Voice of Reason;
had he refused Admittance; or, once ad-
mitted, chased from his Heart in time
the

the Traiterous Illusion; what Misery and Shame and Vengeance might he not have escaped? But, Lust of Power deceived him with the false Magic of apparent Happiness, to court it's seeming Smiles; and like an *Ignis Fatuus*, after leading him through every Maze of Misery, at the expence of Peace, of Honour, of Conscience, Rest and Safety, the gay Illusion ended in a shameful Death. So vain is it to seek even earthly Peace and Happiness in the Pursuit of Power.

“ But why so, *you'll say?* *Abshalom* pursued it in an unlawful Manner, and therefore no wonder he never attain'd to the Possession of it. But is that any Argument that the Possession of Power is not attended with earthly Happiness?”

I answer: *Abshalom* was, in all probability, in a fair way to obtain it. His Disappointment then is at least an Argument that the Pursuit of earthly Power is at best but precarious; and therefore it can never be prudent or safe to renounce the solid Felicity of present Peace of Mind and Conscience, to pursue the uncertain Possession of Power, in which we never can promise ourselves Happiness, however innocently we may possess it. DAVID himself possess'd it not only splendidly but innocently since he received it from God himself; and yet with what Cares what Toils,

Toils, what Dangers, what Perplexities, was not his Possession of Power embitter'd? This then, with the Instance I have just given you in the Rebellion of the unhappy *Abfalom*, may suffice to convince You, Christians, that, whatever Appearances earthly Power ever so eagerly pursued or ever so lawfully obtain'd may assume, it is generally inconsistent with real Felicity even in this Life: Since Peace subsides where Power advances. Ah Dearest Auditors! Why then so anxious to lord it over your Fellow Creatures? Why so restless to obtain this Post, to solicit that Employ, to arrive at that Charge? Surely You forget that disheartening Truth of the Holy-Ghost: *The Powerful shall be powerfully tormented.* * * *Wisd.*
 Believe me then, that, even in a natural ^{vi.} Sense, the pleasing Prospects, with which distant Power endeavours to tempt our Ambition, are a very dangerous Temptation which levels at nothing less than the intire Destruction of our Felicity in this Life, as well as our eternal Happiness in the next.

The Royal DAVID however, tho' burden'd with the Weight of Monarchy and the Load of a vigorous War, enjoy'd for one while a profound Tranquillity within himself: A Tranquillity which was not the Gift of Power, but of the good Use he made of a Power possess'd without Attachment. In this State of Serenity it was that,

taking the Air one Day on the Top of his Palace, He unhappily beheld the wanton *Bathsheba* bathing herself in her Domestic Bath. The unexpected Scene attracts the unguarded King's Attention; he approaches nearer, and eagerly surveys the beauteous dangerous flattering deceitful Object: And soon the distant Prospect swells in his inflamed Imagination with improving Promises of unalloy'd Delight to every Sense, till sensual Delectation, in close Intelligence with his concupiscential Faculties, steals undiscover'd unsuspected to his yielding Heart and takes intire Possession of it. O fatal, fatal Curiosity! O what Changes of Scene does this one treacherous Scene produce! No more can we see in *David* that steady peaceful noble Calm, of Conscience which sweetens princely Care and renders every Burden Light. No more appears in Court gay guiltless Conversation heighten'd by communicative Innocence in a Royal Pattern. But all is now dark Mistry, Intrigue, Perplexity and secret Scheme, how to compleat the black Design, without Disgrace or Danger. Now Sovereign Prerogative insolently argues for Oppression; then conscious Guilt, in league with Fear of Treachery and secret Vengeance from an exasperated injured Subject, rages with destructive Jealousy: And base Adultery must be repair'd with
 baser

baser Massacry. O hapless Monarch! How grossly did not the flattering Prospect of sensual Delight deceive thee? How dearly did'st Thou not purchase a few giddy Minutes of fulsome Pleasure? O what Fears, what Doubts, what Jealousies, what Hopes tormented thee in the Pursuit! O what Guilt, what Mistrusts what Shame, what Restlessness, what Disappointment and Remorse did not attend on thee in the Possession! O what Crimes! O what Punishments! O what endless Repentance and Penance! But ah deluded Prince! Happy for Thee it was that the Illusion ended in Repentance: Else had thy temporal Scourges been succeeded by eternal Vengeance. Else to the Loss of Peace and Innocence and Rest and temporal Happiness Thou would'st have added the Loss of everlasting Happiness, the Loss of God for all Eternity. Such, Beloved, Auditors such are the Fruits which sensual Pleasure is big with, to Those whom it decoys into an Attachment to it with spacious flattering Promises of what it never has to give.

But Flattery of every kind is impotent and barren of Good. Whatever sensitive Titillation we may conceive or promise to ourselves from public Praises, It's Consequences are generally fatal. The natural Tendency of Praise, or just or groundless, is to puff us up with Pride and vain Presumption of ourselves

which seldom fails to hurry us unguardedly to Ruin ; by urging us to such Pursuits as rob us, while we are intent upon them, of Peace, of Rest, and often-times of Virtue, even where they succeed : And where our Enterprizes miscarry, we are sure of losing our Fame, or Substance, or at least our Time, and of still remaining wider of Happiness than before. What loss'd poor *Ab-salom* but the empty Praises of a flattering Tribe of Courtiers, whose Sycophancy in all probability first bewitch'd him with the Lust of Sovereign Power ? O vain *Nebuchadonazor* ! O insolent vain-glorious Monarch ! Had'st Thou never given admittance in thy Heart to the deceitful Attractives of unavailing Praise ; would'st thou ever, by aspiring to Divine Honours, have sunk thyself to the infamous Society of Beasts ? No, Christians, no : It was the Love of Praise and vain Esteem which stripp'd that vain Prince of Honour, Power, Ease and Peace and Happiness. And 'tis the Same which intoxicates the Major Part of Christians, and plunging them into inextricable Labyrinths of Error, widens them daily more and more even from the Happiness of this Life ; which they so eagerly yearn-after but seek in vain, by seeking every where but where It may be found.

You, I know, O Misers, think yourselves the surest of Success in the Pursuit
of

of earthly Pleasures. You imagin all earthly Enjoyment center'd in the Accumulation of Wealth: And the daily Success of your Frauds and the swelling Heaps which your growing Avarice produces are substantial Proofs with you, that You are not mistaken. But ah self-deluding Wretches! In what does your Happiness consist? In starving amidst Abundance? In toiling for Others, and reaping no Comfort or Advantage from your Toils? Does Happiness consist in the bare restless, sleepless, laborious vain Pursuit of It? Ah! Who then in his Senses would covet to be happy, if Labour in vain is all which is meant by being happy? Examin but the Conduct of a Man of Avarice, Christians: And what more inconsistent? What Pains he takes to improve the sordid Substance which engrosses his Affections! What weary Steps! What unwearied Assiduity in his Affairs to purchase cheap, to sell with gross Advantage! What Sweats! What lengthen'd Watches! What rigorous Abstemiousness! What Hunger Thirst and Cold and Want of Necessaries, shall he not spontaneously endure to reek together the sordid glittering Filth he feasts his Eyes on and centers all his Pleasure in! And to what End? To grasp at Happiness in the Possession of it. And does he ever reach that Happiness? He reach it? No, His Avarice with his Hoard encreases. The more
he

he gains the more he is in want of All Things: And that detested Narrowness of Soul which first induced him, with the deceitful Promises of future Rest, to seek his sovereign Felicity in Riches, will not permit him to enjoy them when acquired, but keeps him ever on the Rack of Eagerness for more; tortures him with a Thousand Fears of being rob'd, deceived, assassinated; gnaws him with ten thousand Apprehensions of lessening that Stock he gladly would but cannot carry with him to another World; grinds him with unnumber'd Fears of living yet to want; and in the midst of Plenty starves him with Fear of being starved. Tell me, O Christians, how vain are not the Toils of such a Wretch to reach Felicity; who, in his ill-contrived Pursuit, lives all his Minutes, in this Life, a Stranger to Peace, to Ease, to Sleep, to Rest, to Comfort, Joy and every reasonable Enjoyment: Lives, in a word, or rather dies, in every Instant of his Existence here, an agonizing Life or lingering Death; and dies only *to be buried in Hell*, only to conclude a Life of voluntary Wretchedness with involuntary everlasting Death? What Charms then are there in earthly Power, sensual Delight, unfruitful Praise or sordid Lucre, to justify or even to excuse our Rashness in yielding our Hearts to their deceitful Invitations?

But,

But, *You'll answer me* : " This is not
" the Fault of earthly Pleasures in them-
" selves, but of Us in using them with
" criminal Attachment or seeking them
" with guilty Methods. We own that
" every Pleasure of this Earth must cease
" to be such from the Moment it opposes
" Innocence or Virtue. But surely there
" are Pleasures in this Life which may be
" possess'd, nay pursued with a safe unsullied
" Conscience. And surely Innocent Enjoy-
" ments whether seated in Power, sensitive
" Delight or Fame or Riches, can neither
" be obnoxious to our temporal nor to our
" eternal Happiness." But Hold, Beloved,
Hold. There is egregious Sophistry in this.
Doubtless there is no Evil in the Pleasures
themselves nor in the Enjoyment of them,
if they be possess'd with Innocence and Peace;
or God would not have created them for
Man. But the Grand Difficulty lies in the
Art of pursuing or possessing them with
Peace or Innocence. Since the Fall of
Man, such is the Corruption of our Nature
and such the Intelligence which that Cor-
ruption keeps-up with every earthly Plea-
sure that it is morally impossible to pursue
or to possess Many of those Pleasures with-
out more or less Detriment to Conscience.
And yet I will allow, that, as I have already
shewn you in the foregoing Instances, there
are Some few Remains of Pleasure left
not

not beyond the Reach of Christian Virtue but what they may be pursued and even possess in some degree without Prejudice to Virtue. A Prince for Example may without a Crime take Possession of the Crown, which is devolved to him by Inheritance or free Election, and may dispute it with an Unjust Intruder. A Nobleman or Plebeian may aspire to a Post or Charge or Dignity for which he is qualified, so his Pursuit be carried on by lawful Methods. A Married Person may with Safety indulge the sensitive Appetites in matrimonial Pleasures with Prudence Decency and Temperance. All Men may, and few Men fail to, be desirous of a good Reputation: And every Man is bound by virtuous Means to labour to establish his Good-Name. To aim then at a certain Degree of Fame, so far from being unlawful is commendable. Nor is it less commendable by honest Industry to aspire to Riches in a moderate Manner: For Riches as they are a Means to enable us to practice Many Virtues, are in themselves an innocent desirable Good. Still is it very dangerous both to our temporal and eternal Happiness, to give Entrance in our Hearts to any the least Attachment to these or any other as Innocent Pleasures of the Earth. Nay every Attachment to them is absolutely inconsistent with that Temporal
Peace

Peace in which alone consists the little earthly Happiness We may aspire-to: In-as-much-as, by the Fall of Man, not only Man's Nature, but even every other Being with regard to him is changed; God having inseparably annex'd to every Pleasure a Portion of Care and Pain and Difficulty, as well in it's Possession as in it's Pursuit: And this he has done in punishment of the ill Use which Man made of those earthly Pleasures at a time when he might have tasted them pure and unalloy'd. So that now not even the innocent necessary Solace of eating for the Support of Life is to be purchased but at the Price of painful Industry. *In the Sweat of thy Brow, says GOD to Every-One of us in the Person of ADAM, Shal't Thou eat thy Bread.* *

* Genesis
iii.

What Pleasure so innocent can we form to ourselves, which must not cost us the Price of our Tranquillity to pursue and possess? To obtain this Post, that Charge, tho' ever so due to our Merit, what Toils, what Submissions must not we go through? What Anxieties? What Industry? What Study? What Attendance? To keep it, what unwearied Diligence is not necessary? What Application! What Circumspection! What Labour, Time, and Pain and Patience! And O the Doubts, the Fears, the Apprehensions, at every Possibility of losing it! Besides the Jealousies and Grudges and

Disguists and Calumnies and Plots and Treacheries and Wily Circumventions of the Envious, which must be patiently endured and prudently dissembled to possess it with any Safety to Interest Honour Life or Conscience. Is it a guiltless Pleasure to possess in Wedlock this amiable Person? O the Thick Sprigs of pointed Thorns which must be gather'd with this specious Rose! O the Diversity of Tempers! O the too soon discover'd Imperfections in Each-other! O the Wane of a first Violence of Passion! O the Jealousies attending an Excess of Love! O the Doubts, the Fears, the Animosities, on one Side and the other, caused by Jealousy! O the Pangs of Child-bearing! O the Cares in the Education of a numerous Offspring! O the Agonies when they prove untoward! O the Anguish when the Tractable are Sick or unfortunate! O the living Deaths when they must be resign'd to Death! O the Rack of Disagreement with an odious Partner! O the heart-rending Grievs at separating from a loved and loving Consort! O Poverty! O Sicknefs! O Death! O the innumerable untold Thorns with which the Pleasures of the Marriage State are generally beset! And is the gaudy Flower of human Praise, however justly given more easy to enjoy with unalloy'd Delight? No, Christians, no. That, like the fragrant graceful Eglantine, has it's Briars too; and Those
acute

acute Ones. One just Encomium shall raise a thousand Obloquies, ten thousand Lies. Praise, if unjust, unmasks you to your Friends; and, if well-grounded, exposes You to all the Malice of your Enemies whom it excites with Envy. To study how to merit Men's Esteem is wise: To study how to get it is rank Folly. Since Nothing is more capable of rendering us obnoxious to private Hatred than public Esteem. And vain is it to think that public Esteem will over-balance private Enmity. No, no: DAVID is an Instance of the contrary.

Fraught with Victory and laden with Glory, the magnanimous Youth was returning Triumphant from the Defeat of the Gigantic *Philistin*, when the People, to reward his Bravery with the Marks of their Esteem, came forth to receive him with loud Acclamations of Joy: For *he was accepted in the Eyes of all the People Moreover* To leave him no Room to doubt of the public Esteem he was in, *The very Women who came forth from all the Tribes of Israel, singing and dancing to SAUL the King, in Timbrels of Joy and in Cornets, sung, playing and saying SAUL HAS SMOTE A THOUSAND AND DAVID TEN-THOUSAND.* * O the Noble Encomium! O the exalted Panegyric in Brief! O the flattering Proof of merited Esteem! How

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elated,

* 1 Kings
xviii.

elated, how pleased, how transported would not You be, O Christians; could you but attain to the like Honours? *David* however had no cause to be so. For O the Jealousies! O the Malice, the Hatred, the Rage which they excited in the Breast of *Saul* against him, and which Nothing less would satiate than the Stripling's Blood. It would really move Compassion and Indignation in a Savage, to see the Young Warrior just return'd from rescuing his Native Country out of the Jaws of Ruin and Infamy, instead of receiving the due Premium of his Valour, persecuted to Death with open Violence and secret Treachery; and, Exile in his Native Land, obliged to flee from Place to Place, from Town to Town, from Wilderness to Wilderness; compell'd to seek his Safety in wandering among Strangers, in Beggary, in playing the Madman: And all this for what? Merely for having merited public Esteem and received an uncourted Mark of it in noisy unavailing Praises from a few Women. Go then, Christians: And if you deserve more than *David*; if you are safer from Envy and Enmity than *David*; even pursue the vain Esteem the empty Praises you may perhaps obtain. But if otherwise; have a Care you do not dearly pay the Acquisition at the big Price of Peace, of Rest, of Ease and Health and every desirable Happiness in Life, if not of Life itself.

Riches

Riches as I have already hinted, if we consider nothing in them but the Opportunities they afford us of doing Good, are a desirable Pleasure; But then, if we consider also the many Cares and Pains and Confinements and Anxieties which must be endured to acquire that Pleasure even in a lawful Way, contented Mendicity is a happier State. But why do I say, *happier*, than where there is no Happiness at all? Alas, Who would wish to be happy, if Happiness consists in being the Butt of Envy, the Mark of Thieves, the Sport of Fortune, the Dupe of Knavery; besieged by Flatterers, surrounded by Leeches, imprison'd by Formality; daily liable to be bereft of Substance Reputation and Life, by Sycophants, by Traitors, by Lawyers, by Robbers; by Perjury, by Tyranny, by false Plots, by real Conflagrations Storms Revolutions Murders and infinit other Dangers which attend the Rich, and of which the Beggar never feels a Fear? Go persuade a Rich Man to be as much in peace as, much at Rest, amidst these numerous Perils, as the Poor Man wrapt-up in ragged Safety. But there is no Language which can have the Power of Persuasion against Experience. Too sensibly are the Rich affected with their not ill-grounded Fears, to have any Sense of the Blessing of inward Peace: And without inward Peace what Happiness
can

can there be. O Christians then, dear-loved Christians! What Happiness can you propose to yourselves in the Pursuit or Possession of earthly Power sensual Delight, vain Praise or fordid Riches or any other if there be any other, Pleasure of this Earth; when All or Any of them evidently cost you the Price of Peace and Safety the only valuable Blessings in this Life?

But I remember to have heard of a certain Physician, who, for the sake of the Antidotes, had so long and so frequently swallow'd Poisons of all Sorts till at length they grew so familiar to him that Nothing but the strongest Poisons would nourish him: And this I take, Christians, to be pretty much your Case. So long and so repeatedly have you endured nay hunted after those lurking Miseries which empoison every Enjoyment of this Life, that Many of You can find Nothing in them of bitter, Nothing destructive, Nothing but what Custom has so season'd to your depraved Appetites as to take from them every Appearance of Evil. I would leave you therefore to enjoy the Miseries, which, under the gilded Leaf of nominal Pleasure, you swallow so eagerly and feed upon so leisurely; if all the Mischief ended here. If there was Nothing worse in the Pleasures of this World than there was in *Jonathan's* Honey,

Honey, a simple Taste of which was big with temporal Death ; I could bear, with some Degree of Patience, that Men, that Christians, run so precipitately in search of them. In a word, if earthly Pleasures were obstructive to our Happiness only in this Life ; I would stifle my Concern at the general Infatuation of Mankind for present Enjoyment ; I would see them hug Misery in the Embraces of a pleasing Shadow and would say nothing. But who can forbear speaking, who does but consider how very much the Phantom Pleasures of this Life are apt to wean the Heart of Man from every Desire, nay from every Remembrance of Heaven. A lively Instance we have of this in the present Gospel.

Our Saviour to give his Disciples Encouragement to trample on all the false Joys of this Earth and aspire to the sublimer more substantial Joys of an eternal Kingdom, takes them up to the Summit of *Thabor* ; and, transfiguring Himself on the Mount, gives them a feeble Foretaste of the Glory which shall be reveal'd in them when they quit this miserable Vale of Tears ; regales them, in a word, with a passing Relish of Heaven in the extatic Joy transfused through every Sense to their very Souls, by this Heavenly Vision. Ah ! who would not have expected to hear the Disciples, amidst their Holy Transports of sensitive Pleasure, cry out with
Eagerness

Eagerness after the purer more defined Delights of Paradise? Who would not have expected to hear them say: "O my lovely Jesus! If such be the Sweets of thy participated Mysteries in this Life; O! What must not be the untold unceasing and inconceivable Excess of Bliss ineffable flowing from the full Communication of thy boundless Glory in the Next? O when, when shall this Faith be lost in Evidence? All the Days, I I am now at War, *I am waiting with Impatience for my Change.* * O that it would come! O! If such be the Emanations of my God; what (ah what!) must God himself be, to behold? O how my Soul thirsts after the Living and strong God! Ah! *When shall I come and appear before the Face of my Lord?* † When shall this limited Joy be lost in a Sea of boundless Bliss, with Thee, in Heaven?" Who, *I say*, would have wonder'd to see their spiritual Joy embitter'd by an insupportable Anxiety to quit it for Pleasures more permanent? But! Not at all. The present Enjoyment is all they attend-to. "But it is earthly: It is sensitive: It cannot be permanent without obstructing the future Enjoyment of Infinitely greater Pleasure for Eternity." No Matter. It is present Enjoyment, and that is enough to engross all their Affections and

* Job
xiv.

† Psalm.
xli.

to make them forgetful of every other.

“ *Lord! It is good for us to be here.*

“ Lord, as long as we are well, as long as

“ we are so happy, so full of spiritual

“ Joy in thy Company here, what need is

“ there for changing our Situation; *It is*

“ *good for us to be here*; let us then con-

“ tinue well while we are so. As long

“ as we are with thee, as long as thou

“ ar’t with us, as long as we can re-

“ main on this Earth and be thus at Rest, It

“ is good for us to be here what need have

“ we to look any farther? If Thou can’st

“ put-up with this Earth, we shall readily

“ consent to it. And if *Thou wilt* resolve

“ to remain here; *let us build here three Ta-*

“ *bernacles, One for Thee, One for Moses and*

“ *one for Elias.*” Ah feeble frail unthink-

ing Disciples! How evident to every think-

ing Person is it not that present Enjoyment

however innocent has lost you to yourselves?

How truly had the Evangelist Cause to say

that St. *Peter*, the Speaker for All, *knew not*

what he said. Ah! he forgot, or rather he

never yet consider’d, how infinitely the Joys

of Heaven surpass the utmost Joys of the

Earth. O *Peter*! Did’st Thou but know

what Thou say’st; how little would’st thou

wish to have thy Petition granted! This

Joy, this Glory, this Extacy of Both,

which so ravishes thy feeble Sense, is but a

faint imperfect Taste of that Bliss Thou ar’t

call'd to, It and must be renounced to attain to That. It will be necessary for Christ himself to exchange this private Glory for public Infamy this Delight for exquisite Pain, this Mount for another, this *Thabor* for a *Clavary*; in a word, it will *behoove Christ himself to suffer, and so enter into his Glory*: And can You his Disciples ever hope to follow him thither by any smoother Path? *It is by many Tribulations We must enter into the Kingdom of GOD,* and not by many Pleasures. The Kingdom of Heaven *suffers Violence and None but the Violent bear it away.* Ah! had *Peter* known and thought as much; would he, think you, have given-up his Heart to such a confined Enjoyment? No, Christians, no: But present Pleasure decoy'd him, wean'd him, from the Thought of the Future, the Degeneracy of his Heart, yet unrenew'd, perverted the Purpose of the spiritual Favour; and the best Excuse for his unprovident Request is That which the Evangelist makes for him, that *He knew not what he said.* But if the Conduct of *St. Peter* was improvident on his Side; it was not so on the Almighty's Part. No: Graciously wise was it in Thee, my GOD, to suffer this Minister of thy instructive Truths to err in this Particular. Yes, Christians, doubtless the Divine Wisdom permitted the Apostle thus to err in his Judgment, the
more

more effectually to set our Judgment right by practically convincing us how dangerous is every earthly Pleasure, tho' ever so innocent ever so spiritual in itself; how liable It is to Illusion, and how apt, in Concert with our Self-Love, to lead us into an Apathy for Heaven and Eternity: And therefore how cautious we ought to be of giving it Admittance into our Hearts.

II. All Pleasures then in this Life are Temptations and very dangerous Ones too? Yes, Christians, They are: But it is our Self-Love which makes them so. Temporal Pleasures of every Sort are in themselves but mere external Temptations, which tho' they keep Intelligence with our depraved Appetites, have nevertheless no power in our Hearts till we allow them Entrance there, by giving our sensual Faculties the upper hand of Reason and God's Grace. While then we keep them out of our Hearts, they may besiege us, but they cannot hurt us. In short, while we are watchful to keep our Souls from all Attachment to them; tempt us they may but cannot overcome us either in our Pursuit, or in the Possession, of them. Nay if, by faithful Adhesion to God, We follow closely the Apostle's Rule of *having Nothing* in Affection while *possessing All Things* in Fact; amid'st all the Poms of Power we shall have all the

Innocence of the lowliest Subjection; the lawful Delights of the Sense will be dignified with Purity; Human Praise will become Matter of Self-Humiliation to us; and in the midst of all the Exuberances of Riches and Plenty, we shall be blessed in the holy Poverty of our Spirit and have a Right to the Rewards of voluntary Indigence. And thus may we render meritorious those very earthly Pleasures which Attachment might render Criminal; and which our Indolence always renders at least dangerous Temptations.

To make this wise Use then of Temporal Enjoyment what have we to do but to keep a strict Watch over our Senses in order to prevent their betraying us into any Familiarity with present Pleasures. For the whole Art of Conquest depends upon our Vigilance. If we admit these Traitors to parley with our Sensuality; we shall be decoy'd into Confidence in them: And once we trust to their flattering Approaches; we shall surrender our Hearts to their Discretion, and become the Dupes of our Credulity. Whereas, if, mistrusting their fair Approaches, we keep them at a Distance; check the Sympathy of our Appetites for Them; and absolutely force our Faculties to renounce all internal Intercourse with Them; our Hearts will be safe; They will never gain Admittance within us, and
all

all the Efforts They can make to tempt our Fortitude will only serve to augment our Merit in despising them, our Facility in resisting them and our Glory and Triumph in a compleat Victory over Them.

You will think, perhaps, Some of you, Christians, to excuse yourselves from a Practice of this Importance by pleading an Impossibility of totally renouncing every inward Attachment to Pleasures of the Earth, while you are conversant in it. But, with your Leave, let me ask you: What one Step have you ever yet taken towards it, to be at any Certainty, whether it be possible or not? I ask you not: Whether, to resist the Temptations of temporal Enjoyment, you ever exposed yourselves, after the Example of Christ, to the solitary Horrors of a mountainous Wilderness, rather than be advanced to Power? Whether, like *St. Bernard*, You ever leap'd into a freezing Lake, rather than yield to the insinuating Allectives of carnal Delight? Whether you ever attempted, with a *St. Alexis*, to live in the Disguise of a Beggar in your Parent's Palace, rather than hazard an Attachment to your Parent's Riches? Or whether you ever so much as wish'd, like a *St. Paul* or a *St. Anthony*, to entrench yourselves, against the dangerous Praise or Esteem of Men, amidst the lonely Austerities of an inaccessible Desert? These are Heroic Enterprizes which

which are not to be expected but from an eminent Sanctity. But, methinks, I should be glad to know, when assaulted by any Suggestion of Pleasure, when hurried un-awares to the Brink of a Precipice, when pendent half-over and ready to hurl head-long into the Jaws of Sin, how you then behaved. What Violence did you used to yourselves to draw back? Have you, on such Occasions, immediately had Recourse to GOD, in fervent sincere and serious Prayer, to procure his divine Assistance? Have you ever applied to the holy Exercise of Fasts? Have you ever girt yourselves with a Hair-Cloth, to preserve, at the Expence of bodily Ease, the Innocence and Grace of GOD in your Souls? Have you ever given-up the favourit Temptation, the Darling Pleasure, rather than lose Heaven, your Soul and your GOD? Have you ever, in a word, crush'd the Traitor in the Grass, by resisting repelling a Suggestion in it's first Beginnings, or even breaking-off in time a dangerous Correspondence? Rather on the contrary have not your Souls, through every Sense, invited courted dragg'd Temptation from abroad into the inmost Recesses of your Hearts, by constant Frequentation of Balls Plays and Operas and dissipating *Rendez-vous*, by dangerous Pursuits abroad and Idleness or mispent Hours at home, by trifling with Peril and loudly knocking
at

at the very Gates of Ruin? What Wonder can it be then, that, doing thus, you should conceive it quite impossible to conquer, or even so much as to resist, the insinuating Treachery of earthly Pleasures? Doing thus, I frankly own myself, that it is quite impossible to shut your Hearts and barr-out every Attachment to a flattering World. But would you reverse your Conduct, and forestall the Temptation by keeping it at a Distance; O how possible, how practicable you would find it! "But there is the Point, *you cry*. How CAN I?" Ah! Glorious Apostle Thou, Thanks to thy Faith and Fortitude has't furnish'd me wherewith to answer. these feeble-hearted Christians. How CAN I? *I can all Things in Him who comforts me*. O heartless Christians! Would you but, with St. Paul, fix a firm Faith in the Graces of your Saviour and frequently recurring to the Fountains of his precious Blood draw thence your Fortitude and Consolation; soon, soon would you find, that You, as well as He were, are able to do *All Things in him*: You would find in that *All Things* the Incentives of the Flesh, subdued, the raging Heats of youthful Blood allay'd, and the rash furious Fervour of green unsettled Years suppress'd and humbled: You would find the Excitements of Companions check'd by Remorses

morses of Conscience; the Pressures of *Satan* repell'd by the Love of a crucified Christ; and the slippery Paths of sinful Occasions (which are not sought) made possible to pass over, by the Fear of God.

But what am I talking of? The bear Idea of an Apostle lifted by Grace to the third Heaven makes you lose Sight of the Hopes of imitating him. Well then, Beloved, let us confine ourselves to a more humble Sphere. You All know, I presume the Case of Poor Innocent *Joseph* when sent a Slave into *Egypt*. Nor need I acquaint you with the Tenderness of his Age, the Gracefulness of his Person, the Sprightliness of his Mind, the Gentleness of his Temper, nor the Nobility of his Blood; nor yet with the many Attractives which render'd him truly amiable: Already I imagin you are sufficiently inform'd of them. But I very much question whether or not, you have ever sufficiently weigh'd the perilous Assault he had to sustain from the Wife of his Master: He a poor and powerless Stranger, his Mistress rich and powerful; He without Art or Experience, his Lady all Guile and Contrivance; the Attacks frequent, the Occasions unavoidable, the Attractives excessive, the Facility of Possession uncommon, the Consent in no Danger of Punishment, but the Refusal big with irremediable Misery.

Ah!

Ah! What, I wonder, what would One of our perfumed spruce delicate powder'd Christians of this Age say to himself in such a Situation? Yet I guess. "How CAN I, " *he would cry?* How can I resist this " Temptation to sensual Delight, thus " distant from my native Home, and stript " of every other earthly Pleasure? If I " lose this Good Fortune; what must be " my Portion? A *Yes* puts me in im- " mediate Possession of Wealth and Li- " berty: A *No* plunges me into the Ex- " treme of Distress amidst the Horrors of " a Dungeon. To reject such gracious Ad- " vances from an absolute Mistress to her " Slave, would it not be the grossest Ill- " breeding? To provoke the Indignation of " a passionately amorous Woman, would " it be rank Folly and Madness? Carest, " intreated, solicited; in a word, besieged " by beneficent flattering Beauty from " without, and betray'd by Vehemence of " Fears and Frailty within, how is it pos- " sible to keep One's Ground? How CAN " I." Thus, *I fear*, thus would the major Part of our Sex reason in such a Situation. And ah! How many of the chaster Modest more virtuous Sex are fatally betray'd into their Ruin by such a fallacious kind of Reasoning. "How CAN I, *says this* " *Servant Maiden to herself?* How can I " return with Indignation the engaging
VOL. II. N " Advances

“ Advances of this generous Master? Ser-
 “ vice is no Inheritance: Confined and
 “ hardly treated by a rigorous Mistress,
 “ flatter’d and courted by an indulgent
 “ Master, Poor and but little fitted for
 “ Toil, *How can I* resist the Occasion
 “ Fortune offers to rescue me at once from
 “ Want and Labour? If I consent, Ease
 “ Wealth and Pleasure wait on me: If I
 “ refuse, Distress and Servitude attend me
 “ to my Grave. *How can I* then stand
 “ Firm?” Poor mistaken Dupes of Irre-
 flection! How illy you misunderstand the
 genuin Sense of those few Words! Ah
 how do you abase the Dignity the Power of
 that noble Soul franchised and fortified with
 the all-powerful Grace of God! *Joseph*
 was as poor as the poorest of you All; as
 delicate, as noble, as honour’d, as unfit for
 Labour as any of you All; as severely tempted
 as the worst of You; more generous, more
 honourable, more full of the Fear of God
 than Most of You. He to had his Argument,
How can I. But ah! How differently does he
 turn it. How CAN I, he cries, *how can I*
commit this Evil, and Sin against my Lord? *
 This is indeed applying Words to their own
 natural Meaning: This is discoursing truly like
 a Rational Creature: “ As if he had said, How
 “ can I presume to offend my God with Sin,
 “ to offend my Neighbour by planting In-
 “ famy or Discord or both in an Honourable
 “ Family,

* Genesis
 xxxix.

“ Family, to offend myself by throwing a
“ Stain upon my Conscience. How CAN I?”
O Feeble tempted Christians ! Thus, thus is
it that you should turn those dubious Words
How can I; when ever you are assail’d
by tempting Pleasures. “ Alas how can I
“ do this Evil, and sin against my Master,
“ or my Mistress? *How can I*, dare to
“ betray the Trust reposed in my Virtue?
“ *How can I* venture to insult my God
“ with an open Violation of his Laws,
“ open to Him, if hidden to the World?
“ *How can I* think of injuring my Neigh-
“ bour in so gross a manner, in a Point so
“ tender; which, if discover’d, sows in the
“ Family endless Discord, Shame and Di-
“ straction; and, if conceal’d, will alienate
“ their Hearts and like a Cankerworm
“ corrode and gnaw insensibly their mutual
“ Peace? *How can I* be so barbarous to
“ myself as to commit this Evil: Which,
“ if detected, as it most probably will be
“ soon or late, will load me with ever-
“ lasting Shame and Misery: And if it
“ should by chance remain a Secret; it still
“ must expose me to the Contempt even
“ of my Tempter, destroy my Peace with
“ insupportable Remorses of my Con-
“ science, and, what is worse, render me
“ odious to my God? What then, ah!
“ what Comparison can there be between
“ the Poverty the Labour the Confine-
N 2 “ ment

" ment and Hard Usage I thus apprehend,
 " tho' I should endure it to the End of
 " Life, and the Shame the Punishment the
 " Guilt the temporal Infamy and eternal
 " Misery which one Consent to this insi-
 " nuating Pleasure threatens me withal?
 " *How can I then do this Evil? How can I.*"

I will not however, Beloved, dispute
 with you, what I cannot doubt of, that
 Resistance is very Difficult in Such and
 many other Cases: Nor would I in the least
 wish to conceal the Sweats (almost of
 Blood) which it must cost us, when closely
 prest by Pleasure, to come off with Victory.
 St. *John Chrysostom* was certainly in the
 right when he admired the Flight of
Joseph as a Miracle superior to that of the
Three Children's Escape out of the Furnace
 at *Babylon*. But what are all the Difficulties
 we have to surmount, in comparison with the
 Immensity of Glory and Bliss which we
 may acquire by faithfully resisting the Temp-
 tations of earthly Pleasure. And with what
 Courage ought we not to combat them when
 we consider, that the Victory depends upon
 our own Will, and that we have a God
 ever ready to combat with and for us:
*A faithful God who will not suffer us to
 be tempted beyond our Strength.* " Can
 " We then, you'll say, escape these Extreme
 " Occasions which our involuntary Situa-
 " tion throws us into? Can we touch the
 Pitch

" Pitch of Vicious Example and not be
 " defiled by it?" Are We Christians,
I ask? Do we believe that God permits
 them? Do we believe his Truth, that *he*
will not suffer us to be tempted beyond our
Strength? You will answer me, *Yes.* Then
 I say we must allow, that we can resist
 them. " What then! Can we poor Ser-
 " vants Children Dependents, obliged
 " by Necessity to live amidst every Scene
 " of Licentiousness; We Great Personages
 " amidst an inevitable Life of Dissipation,
 " amidst intemperate Entertainments where
 " more Consciencies are destroy'd than
 " Healths are toasted, amidst the Snares of
 " so many secret Wolves, amidst the In-
 " decencies of so many open Libertines, can
 " We preserved our Innocence inviolate,
 " or even unstain'd? Can We? Doubtless
 We can if we have but the Resolution and
 Grace to will. " But Poverty crushes me
 " within Doors, and there is a great Per-
 " sonage who will enter by a Golden Key:
 " Can I hinder his Entrance? Can I
 " shut-out Relief in Extreme Necessity?"
 Yes: With a little Confidence in that
 God, who *suffers us not to be tempted beyond*
our Strength, I can. " But the Person who
 " lays Siege to my Honour is so powerful,
 " so resolute, so desperate, that if I open
 " but my Mouth to refuse; it may be shut-
 " up forever. Can I then cry-out, with a
 " Knife

“ Knife at my Throat ? ” Yes : *I say again.* If I do not prefer a few uncertain Days of unreputable Life to an Eternity of Glory ; I CAN. In a word, I am able ; Nay more than able, I am almighty in God : For *I can all Things in him who comforts me ;* unless under a Counterfeit *I cannot* I conceal an *I will not.* But ah ! There will come a Day of Restitution when all Things must be restored to their true Names, when Many an *I cannot* will be unmask’d and the Lapses which now are honourably call’d Imbecillities and human Frailties will be treated by the Almighty as shameful Indecencies and absolute Perversities.

Flatter not yourselves then, Christians, that the Difficulty of resisting the Pleasures of the Earth will excuse your surrendering your Hearts to their Discretion. Your Temptations cannot be more vigorous than Those of *Joseph*. It was not the Skirmish of a few Hours, not a flying Combat which He sustain’d. No, no : says Holy Writ. *From Day to Day both the Woman was importune to the Youth, and he refused the Adultery.* Rather than He would offend his God, injure his Neighbour, or sully his Purity with forbidden Pleasure, He chose to hazard Imprisonement, Tortures and even Death : And shall You unthreaten’d uncourted run head-long yourselves to the Courtship of every lawless Delight ? If He
could

could renounce the proffer'd Advantages of this Life rather than hazard the Eternal Advantages of the next; shall Christians not be able to do as much? Shall a *Hebrew* be able to do more than a Christian can? Nay shall Infidels actually have done more? Shall one Roman General trample on Power, Riches, and vain Esteem by returning from Victory to the Plough, and Another, with captive Beauty at his Mercy and sensual Delight in his Power to command, nobly refuse the flattering Temptation Entrance in his Heart; and Christians give it Admittance? What have you to say of Soldiers confronting all the Terrors of Fire and Steel to repel Hunger? Of miserable Mariners boldly braving all the Horrors of Sea and Elements to flee from Poverty? Did You ever act so vigorously, hazard equally, nay hazard any Thing to flee Temptation to conquer the Attachment you have to earthly Pleasures? Do you not rather run to meet them? Do you not hug and cherish every Joy, every Pleasure, every Delight, which the flattering World once offers to your Senses? And do you not yield yourselves such abject Slaves to it as inwardly to cry, like the Apostles, on Mount *Thabor*: *It is good for us to be here?*

Not but there is a very great Difference between the Apostles Case and yours. Their Eagerness in present Delight was innocent

cent, tho' it might have been dangerous, and was the Effect of Reflection's Absence. Your Eagerness for future, your Attachment to present Enjoyment, is not only always dangerous, but generally sinful, because mostly the Effect of Deliberation. They were transported with their present Delight because Christ was with them, and it was, to be with him, that they wanted to continue there. Your Delight is in Pleasures which lead you wide of Christ; and You will persist in the Pursuit of them, at the manifest Risk of losing him forever. O Christians! What are you about? Ah be once yourselves: Look round this flattering World and examine the Merit of every Pleasure It has to give; and if You find one Single One, which has Solidity or Certainty: Nay I say more, if you find One which is not extremely dangerous to pursue, and bitter to possess; I will myself recommend it to you. But if You cannot find one Earthly Enjoyment but what must cost you your Peace, your Ease, your Reputation, your Life or Health, or All; Even take my Advice: Never give them Admittance to your Hearts; keep them at a Distance, resist them from their Beginning and renounce, from their first Approaches every internal Intercourse with them. Thus will you secure to Yourself that Felicity, which is lawful for you to wish in this
Life,

Life, and that eternal Happiness you are created for in the Next: And which I beseech God, &c. *In the Name, &c.*

Second INDICATION of the PASSION.

O F all the Crimes which Human Nature is so apt to fall into, there is no One which leaves behind it, in the Heart of a Criminal, so acute a Sting and so lasting a Repentance as the shedding of Human Blood. The Horror which This Crime indelibly stamps on the Imagination of an Assassin is a kind of hideous Mimic of that all-wise Providence which draws Good out of Evil. For It melts Cruelty into Compassion, Enmity into Friendship, and the most implacable Hatred into the softest Love. No sooner has a Man hunted his real or fancied Adversary to Death, than his destructive Vengeance subsides to make way for self-tormenting Pity: And, like the Coral-tree which harden'd out of it's Element softens when restored to it's native Flood, implacable as his Soul was while torn from the Bowels of Humanity, no sooner is It dipp'd in fraternal Blood than It mollifies him into sympathetic Distress: The Object of his Guilt becomes the Subject of his Repentance, and forcibly compells him with unfeigned Remorse to bewail the Deceased, in the Character of an injured Friend, whom,

while living, he pursued in the mistaken Shape of an injurious Enemy. An Instance of This was the Emperor *Bassian*, who, as History inform us, after killing his Brother *Geta*, was stung with so deathless a Remorse, that to his Grave he could never more hear his Name utter'd or behold his Resemblance, tho' but in a Picture, without breaking-forth into a Flood of disconsolate Tears.

Ah Christians, Christians! If the Murder of a Brother, of a Neighbour, a mere Man, a sinful Man, a very Enemy, can soften into Pity, Grief and inconsolable Repentance, the Hearts of the most harden'd Butchers; how comes it, that the Eyes of the most tender Christians cannot find a Tear to mourn the Assassination of their injured Brother, Father, Friend and GOD and Saviour? That Sacred JESUS, at whose awful Name you bow your Heads and bow, I hope, your Hearts, appear'd on Earth to act in all these Characters, in Man's behalf. And he who *thought it no Robbery to be himself equal to GOD, lower'd himself for love of Man, taking upon him the Form of a Servant, made to the Likeness of Man, and in Habit found as Man.* * And what Requital did Man make him for all this Excess of Bounty? Why---- his Requital was a painful, cruelly painful, multiplied, ignominious, lingering Death, terminated on

* *Philipp.*

a shameful Cross? And of the almost infinite Number of Men who combined in the ungrateful Deicide, where is the Man who relents or bewails him? How often, Beloved, do you even you hear his sacred Name pronounced! And Which of you ever pays to it the Tribute of a Tear? How frequently do you behold the sacred Semblance of your injured JESUS in a Crucifix! And Which of you ever bathed it with compunctive Moisture? Ah! Go and learn of Savages the Art of melting into Tears. 'Twas not the Canvas or the Colours *Bassian* wept for, but the inhuman Fratricide, which Those, work'd-up into the Likeness of his Brother, put him in mind of. A Crucifix is but a Crucifix, make the most of it: And Ivory and Wood are still but Ivory and Wood; and barely view'd as such deserve our Spittle rather than our Tears. But ah! Who can behold them thrown into the sad disfigured Form of an affinated Saviour, without remembering the outrageous Injuries he endured for and from ourselves? Who can remember These, and yet forbear to weep.

Surely then Christians, you are under some extreme Mistake, and comfort yourselves with thinking, You had no hand in this unnatural Murder. But ah! To our Misfortune, You and I are Parties as much concern'd as Any in the cruental Fratricide. For our Crimes did JESUS die: Each, Each of

* Genesis
iv.

us was present in his Mind and present in the Cause: And had there been no other Crimes, to die for Those would have kill'd him. We then, among the rest, pronounced the fatal Sentence: These guilty Hands of ours subscribed the deadly Warrant, and even executed it: And GOD may justly say to Every-One of Us, as once to CAIN, * *the Voice of thy Brother's Blood cries to me from the Earth.* Whence then, whence is it that every Cheek is dry, where every Heart should weep with Tears of Blood? Had Christ been less than Man; had He, at best, but been a Stranger, nay an Enemy, so far from GOD and Friend and Brother to us; the Cruelties he suffer'd had been enough to draw a Sea of Tears from Christian Eyes. But ah! The Misfortune is, that Christians seldom reflect upon his Sufferings. You either never read his Passion in the Gospel, or if you read it, 'tis not with the Seriousness you read a Novel with: but with the Dissipation of a News-paper, you read it over only to forget it. Fain would I therefore fix it in your Minds by giving you a just Idea of it. But That, alas, is quite impossible. No Words can utter and no Tongue can tell the Agonies which JESUS, guiltless JESUS, felt for You and me. All I can do is, by the help of Words, to shew you, how inexpressible his Sufferings were; that you may gather thence,

thence, how endless your Condolence and Contrition ought to be. This I shall do on next *Good-Friday*, in an imperfect Recital of the Passion: And hope to see a crouded Audience and see it bathed in Tears. But I shall fright you if I talk of Crouds. Jesus may be haled and trampled on by Crouds of Rabble: But You, alas, are too tender to bear a little Crouding, for his Sake. Leave then these Walls the Proxies of your Grief: These Walls, like Rocks, shall rend in-twain with Grief, while You, less yielding than the Rocks, sit snug and unconcern'd, at Home. Or, if you chuse to come and triumph over Jesu's Sufferings with dry Eyes; even shut the Doors, nay barricade them; lest some relenting Heart should enter to interrupt your Quiet. The Poor especially be sure keep out: For They are his Friends, and Fellow-sufferers in this Life, and may even force a Tear from You by their Example. But where am I? Not among Canibals but Christians, and Zealous Christians: Whom I hope to see, that Day, transform'd from Crouds of Criminals to Crouds of Saints.



SERMON



S E R M O N

ON THE

Third SUNDAY in L E N T.

St. L U K E xi. 14.

JESUS was casting-out a Devil and It was dumb: And when he had cast-out the Devil, the Dumb-Man spoke and the Crouds were astonish'd.



IT is a Part, Beloved Faithful, and not the least Part of the Devil's Artifice, once he possesses a Soul by Sin, to render it spiritually dumb; that, by robbing it of the Means of applying for a Remedy, he may effectually maintain his Tyrannic Dominion over it. A Stratagem This, which He has long practised upon the Souls of Sinners; and, alas, with too frequent and fatal Success. For ah! how Many unhappy Criminals are there not in the Church,

Church, to this Day as heretofore, who, sensibly feeling the bitter Effects of *Satan's* arbitrary Oppression, daily, nay every Hour, every Instant, groan under the unwieldy Weight of an over-burden'd Conscience! Yet have they not either Courage or Resolution to disburden themselves at the Feet of that Divine Lord who so graciously invites All, *who labour and are heavy-laden*, * to accept Relief and Refreshment from him, in the Holy Sacrament of Penance! But whence proceeds this strange this lamentable Inconsistency? Alas! It arises from a guilty Want of Speech. Alas! They are possess'd with a Dumb-Devil, who artfully ties-up their Tongues from complaining of their Grievances to the spiritual Physician in the sacred Tribunal of Confession; and either suffers them not to approach to God's Minister for a Cure, or, when they approach, curbs their Resolution from laying open their Evils in order for a Cure. Poor unhappy Creatures! Miserable Dupes of their own Inconsideracy! How do I not compassionate them? And who can forbear shedding Tears of Concern in Sight of such thoughtless Perversity, which is so much the more to be deplored as the Muteness of the Soul is inexpressibly more fatal, as well as more frequent, than That of the Body? And therefore is this spiritual Dumbness of more dangerous Tendency than That of the

*St. Matth
xi.

the Sense; not only because the Faculties of the Soul are infinitely Superior in Nature and Office to Those of the Flesh, but also because it requires an infinitely greater Miracle from the Hand of God to cure the Former than the Latter. JESUS CHRIST, we find in the Gospel for this Day, with the single Assistance of a merciful Word, dispossesses the carnally Dumb-Man, of the Devil who lock'd up his Utterance; and with the sole courteous Exorcism of his all-powerful Grace, restores the Patient to the Use of his Speech. In fact, *the Dumb-Man speaks, and the gaping Multitudes are astonish'd.* And well may they wonder: The Miracle is great indeed. For if the Dumb-Man speaks; then He must be cured. This is a natural Consequence in a carnal Sense. Ah! Would I could say as much in a spiritual One. But alas! there are many spiritual Mutes, who are help'd to the Facility of Utterance; who are not therefore cured. On the reverse, tho' preventing Grace sets their Tongue at Liberty; all the Use they make of the miraculous Mercy, is, to strengthen the Chains with which the Devil holds them in Slavery. They speak, in good Truth; but they are not cured of the Dumb-Devil who possesses them; because they do not take care to speak what they ought and as they ought. Don't imagin, Christians, that I am fish-
ing

ing now for Matter to make you miserable, or that I want to trouble the Tranquillity of your Consciences by raising in them unnecessary Scruples. No, no: Too dear to me is the Happiness of every Individual among You; Too much do I wish you the Blessings of internal Peace to disturb it where it is real. But after all, what Confusion can be more fatal than a fallacious Peace? What Disorder more dangerous than a supine Tranquillity in the midst of Ruin? And what better is the Peace of a Multitude of modern Christians? For to see them every Day confessing their Sins, yet every Day repeating them; to see the frequent Confessions and Applications to the Divine Eucharist attended with little other Fruit than as frequent Relapses; to see that Every *Easter* finds those very Persons greater Sinners than ever, whom but a Year before it seem'd to have transform'd to serious Penitents; who but must suspect, that their Peace is not real, that their Care is feign'd, that they are spiritual Mutes in Confession, or, at least, that the Mutes do not speak to the Purpose. But let us speak plain: For my own part, it makes me shrewdly suspect that many Confessions are fruitless, Many pernicious, Many not only null but Sacrilegious; that the Devil, instead of being cast-out, has establish'd his despotic Dominion in the Souls of Such with greater Tyranny than ever;

and that the major Part of Mankind are in This like those unhappy Creatures, who drown themselves in the Bath which they went into for a Cure. To apply then a seasonable Remedy to so desperate and general Disorder I shall now endeavour, with the Divine Assistance, to lay before you in all their Horror.

I. The Abuses committed in the Holy Sacrament of Penance, by which the Confession of a Multitude of Christians are render'd not only invalid, but oftentimes Sacrilegious, and for the major Part at least fruitless: *And*

II. The Causes of such Abuses and the Means of removing Them,

“ Assist me Spirit Divine! For Thou
 “ alone can’st dot it. Assist me to cast-out
 “ of every Christian Breast, this speechless
 “ Devil; Who, not content to rule us with
 “ despotic Tyranny, labours to make us
 “ Tools in eternizing our own Slavery.
 “ Give me the heavenly Energy which may
 “ suffice to make these Christians feel the
 “ mad Extravagance of working this sa-
 “ cramental Remedy for Sin into the Poison
 “ of Damnation: And since, dear Lord, in
 “ thy Excess of Mercy, thou hast vouch-
 “ safed to leave thy Ministers the Power of
 “ releasing us from the guilty Chains of Sin
 “ and Satan; O! For Pity’s sake, permit
 “ us

“ us not to lose the inestimable Benefit by
“ a more guilty Silence, or by a senseless
“ undigested Narrative of Crimes, pregnant
“ with One still greater than them all.”

I. What Institution is there so sacred, so Divine which our Corruption does not abuse? Reversed by the Malice of That, every gracious Design of God is perverted into Evil. God design'd that by Confession We should rise out of a State of Sin; and who could dream, if Experience did not shew it to us broad awake, that Any of us could be so outrageously perverse as to make use of it to plunge ourselves into that State deeper and deeper? And how Many, alas, could Confessions be made public, would there not appear, who, instead of confessing their Sins, go to the Confessional the better to conceal them! Their Perfections the Priest is sure of being inform'd of, directly or obliquely: The Failings of a Husband of a Wife, of a Relation or an Acquaintance he is sure to have forced upon him: But of their own Sins, he is less certain after Confession than before! Or if they do confess certain Foibles which they are neither ashamed of nor sorry for; it is only to give a Confessor the less Mistrust of the greater Crimes they are resolved to stifle. O daring Perfidy! O insolent Sacrilege! Is This recurring for a Cure to the Physician? Or is it not

rather perverting his Prescription into Ruin? Is this appeasing God? Or not rather insulting him? Ah Beloved! what then can tempt you to act thus? If you mean not to reveal the Deformity of your Souls; why make them more deform by a sacrilegious Hypocrisy? Why go to Confession at all? Or if you go to confess your Sins, why stifle Any? It is not with the Tribunal of Christ as with the Bar of the World. At the earthly Bar you have indeed oftentimes a pitiless Judge, the very Sternness of whose Countenance is enough to instill Horror into a Criminal and anticipate in him all the Agonies of his Execution; a Jury, perhaps, which with a Thousand Cross-Questions shall draw your very Condemnation from your own Mouth; Witnesses to confront you; Scribes to record your Infamy; and a crouded Audience to publish your Shame: If you refuse to plead; There are Tortures to compel you: If you plead Innocent; you are persecuted with redoubled Rigour: If you plead guilty; you are at once condemn'd, loaded with Fetters and haled away to Jail: But to Jail, *did I say?* You are dragg'd to a condemn'd Cell, to a Dungeon, loaded with Terrors, with Confusion, with Irons, never to see the Light of any Day but that Last which is to guide you to an infamous Gibbet. But at the Tribunal of Christ, at the Tribunal of Confession, you are sure to meet with

Nothing

Nothing like this. On the Reverse : O the Lenity, the Tenderneſs, the Diſcretion you there are ſure to meet with ! Your Supreme Judge is the Merciful JESUS : Your Mediator is a ſympathizing Brother, whoſe native Frailty calls aloud on him to feel for you and compaſſionate your Weakneſs : Yourſelf are your ſole Accuſer Proſecutor and Witneſs : And you may with ſafety plead Guilty to the moſt enormous Crimes ; ſince Your God and Judge requires you to plead Guilty, merely becauſe he wants you to live, and not barely to live but to reign and to reign eternally. Why then ſtiſle any Sin at ſo merciful a Bar ? Why not lay open with ſincerity all Diſorders in your Souls, that they may be removed ? Why envenom the Source which is pregnant with Life ? Or why fill your Mouths with Poiſon, to drink from that ſalutary Source the Draught of Death ? Are you aſhamed of laying open your Diſeaſe to your Divine Phyſician ? Do you bluſh to reveal your Infirmities to his Miniſter as infirm by Nature as yourſelves : Ah what an Illuſion of Satan ! Ah what Madneſs of Yours to ſecond his Project rather than the Deſign of God ! His Deſign was that Shame ſhould ſerve you as a Bridle to Sin : Why will you make it the Spur to Guilt ? Why will you let the Monster perſuade you to bluſh at Confefſion, who diſſuades you from it every where elſe ?
Ah !

Ah! Believe me for once: The Blushes he then suggests to you, are the Retaliations of a Traitor. We read to this Purpose a Vision of One of the Fathers of the Desert. Once on a time amidst the Fervor of an intense Contemplation, his Prayer is interrupted with a spiritual Vision; and in It he perceives in Spirit the Devil very busy about a Confessional throng'd with Penitents. Shock'd at the horrid Sight, yet re-invigorated by Innocence, the holy Hermit intrepidly questions the Fiend, *what he was doing there?* "Doing *says the Devil?* I am making Restitution." Strange Paradox! Satan making Restitution! The Author of all Fraud, become Administerer of Justice? "Yes, *replies the Rebel,* I am making Restitution. I am restoring to Penitents what I took from them before they were Such. I robb'd them of Shame, while they were sinning; that they might accumulate Sin upon Sin: And now they have sinn'd I restore them back their Blushes; that they may want Courage to rid themselves of those Sins by Confession." It is even so, Christians: Whatever Authority the Fact may be built on the Moral is Solid. This is a frequent Artifice of our common Enemy. Many are the Christians, I fear, whom Satan himself sends to the Confessional, and even permits unmolested to accuse themselves of many Sins;

Sins; only that He may draw them unawares, by concealing some favourit Vice, to commit another still greater, and thereby destroy the whole Validity as well as Benefit of the Sacrament. For Grace is indivisible, and He who sins against one Part of this great Law is made guilty of all.

Thus does this Enemy to our Happiness, in order to secure his Dominion over us, invert the very natural Order of Things, which God's ineffable Wisdom disposed with the Design to bring us to the Possession of himself. This is an Observation as old as St. *John Chrysostom's* Memory who taught it us. "God, says the Saint, requires Shame to be attach'd to Sin and Confidence to Confession: But the Devil inverts this blessed Disposition of Divine Providence and endeavours to annex Confidence to Sin and Shame to Confession." While we are in a State of Justification, what does not the infernal Traitor do, what does he not try, to separate us from Guardian Grace? Before the Will he throws every Allurement which may entice it to Sin; and the more easily to compass his wicked Purpose robs Virtue, or aims at least at robbing it, of it's most faithful Handmaid, modest Shame: Well knowing that, where Modesty is not by to lend an upholding Arm, Virtue and Grace soon sicken and give Sin Way to advance. Therefore does the Fiend,
while

while we are at parley with Sin, paint it in the most pleasing Colours possible, as Something exceedingly delightful in the Pursuit, inestimable in it's Possession, and attended with no evil Consequences are such as, the worst come to the worst, may be easily repair'd. " Pooh! It is but a trifling Crime after
 " all : And we are Young : We may then
 " have time to repent of it, we may here-
 " after confess it, leave it off, and even
 " atone for it to Almighty God ; and God,
 " who knows the Frailty of our Nature is
 " merciful and will readily pardon us for
 " asking him to do it." Thus labours the perfidious Fiend to rob us of Shame while he is tempting us to Sin. But--- have we stretcht-out our Hands to the gilded Bait? Like some delusive Imagery the Effect of magic Spells, It in an Instant changes Shape and Colour: And when we think of confessing it ; It swells to such a hideous Figure and enormous Bulk, that we blush at the bare Proposal of confessing it: Egregious Idiots, as we are, thus to board-up Matter for an endless more intolerable Confusion in the End. To what then shall I compare such senseless Conduct, better than to the Folly of an unguarded Woman, who, heedless of her Virgin Honour, too lightly parts with it ; and then as foolishly stifles her Disgrace from the very Friend who might conceal ; it and stifles it till the Pangs
 of

of Labour render her Infamy universal and deathless. Ah! too truly, too frequently are the Words of the Prophet verified in the Persons of modern Christians. *The Iniquity of Ephraim is bound-up and his Sin is conceal'd: But the Pains of a Woman in Labour shall come upon him at last.* * Yes, ^{* Hosea xiii.} O perverse Sinners! Yes, O sacrilegious Pretenders to Penance! Be assured, whoever you are, that this will be your irremediable Case, if you persist long in such criminal Silence. The Pangs of Death will come upon you: Your Sins will fly in your Faces: And your Consciences will sting you with intolerable Remorse, No Confessor by to disburden you of them. Or if you have One near you; *Satan* will mock your Endeavours to profit by the Priest you have so often imposed upon with mock Confessions, when your disbanded Shame, once more become Master of you, will rob you in Turn of the Benefit of the Assistance of God's Minister: And your Disgrace, which you might have prevented so easily so cheaply, will be reserved till the excruciating Tortures of Despair publish your Infamy on a Death-Bed, to render it as endless as it will be universally exposed to the whole attentive World in the Day of General Scrutiny. Ah Sinners! What are you about? Do you forget the nice Distinction of *Ecclesiastes*. *There is, says he, a*
VOL. II. Q Confusion

* Eccles.
iv.

Confusion which leads to Sin: And there is a Confusion which leads to Glory. * Surely, if Shame be ever required, it is not at the Ear of a Confessor, whither you are invited to throw-off your Sins. No, no: That is a Shame which tends only to keep the Chains of Guilt on you, to hurry you farther into the Slavery of *Satan*: That is the Dumb-Devil who labours to keep Possession of You: That, in a word, *is the Confusion which tends to Sin*: And therefore to Infamy and eternal Destruction. Surely, *I say*, on the contrary, if ever Blushes are seasonable, it must be only when you are sinning against the Lord your God. Ah Christians! Yes: When you are tempted to fly in the Face of your Divine Maker; Or, when you feel a Reluctance to return to him who so graciously invites you; then, then indeed, and only then have you reason to Blush: Then and only then you ought to be cover'd with Horror and Confusion. For then your Shame may be a Confusion tending to a Reconciliation with your injured Lord, *a Confusion which leads to Glory*. Of two Evils, is it not ever advisable to chuse the Least? Surely then, O Sinners, to humble yourselves at the sacred inviolably secret Bar of Confession before one Man must be infinitely more eligible than, for want of so doing, to be cover'd with public Infamy before the whole

whole Universe in the General Judgment. And once you have forfeited Grace for Sin; One of these Two Humiliations is the inevitable Consequence. Chuse then which you think is most eligible: *If you judge yourselves, you shall not be judged,* as the Apostle assures you. "But if you
"are too delicate, *says the Lord by the*
"Mouth of One of his Prophets; if you
"are too lenitive with Iniquity to pass
"Sentence on your own Guilt; if, in
"short, you wait till I judge you; *I will*
"stamp your Sins on your Foreheads: and
"will expose your Iniquity to all Nations."

Say then, O Beloved Brethren: Why must this Dumb-Devil be cherish'd amidst us? Why shall we feel such Repugnance at disburdening ourselves in Confession to God's Minister of those Crimes which we committed with so much facility? Why conceal the Wound which cannot be cured without being reveal'd?

"But who would be so base, *you'll*
"say, as actually to present themselves to
"the sacred Tribunal of Confession to
"impose upon God's Minister by stifling
"their Sins and concealing their in-
"ward Wounds?" There are not Many
it is to be hoped, who make so familiar
with Sacrilege as absolutely to pass over
their Sins in Silence when at Confession.
But then Many there are, who mutter

them between their Teeth, rather than confess them; Many who palliate them with a thousand Excuses; Many who gild them over to the Eye of the Confessor so artfully as to render it very difficult for him to discover the Bitter, the Poison, their Sins are full of. Ah! And is not This a grievous very grievous Abuse, nay the worst of Abuses, if we credit St. *Peter Damian*? “ There is no Evil in Human Nature more “ dangerously heinous than to stand up in “ the Defence of Vices committed, *says the* “ *Saint.* ” O Christians, Christians! You go to the Foot of that Priest in his Confessional: And for what? Is it not God, who, by the inward Voice of his Grace speaking to your Consciences, sends you to that Priest, as he sent the Leper in St. *Matthew*: Remember then what your Saviour has said to That Leper and to Every-One of You: Go, and shew yourself to the Priest. * It is yourselves you are to shew not your Neighbour; It is your Interior, not your Figure and Dress. Would it not, think you, have been a gross Piece of Stupidity in that Leper; if, instead of revealing his uncleanly Disease to the Priest, he had labour’d to conceal it, and amused himself with telling him what a Leprous Condition such a Relation, such a Neighbour, such an Acquaintance was in, and had like to have drawn even him into? And

*St. *Matth*
viii.

And why then will you, O Christians, as too Many of You do, overlook your own Disorders to confess those of your Neighbours; when yourselves are, and You ought to think yourselves, the only Guilty there?

“ Go then, *says St. Ambrose*, and shew, Every-
“ One, yourself: Go shew, not yours, but
“ yourself; not to denounce Others, but to
“ renounce yourself up to God; that, tho-
“ roughly cleansed from the filth of former
“ Actions, You may consecrate to his Divine
“ Majesty a Victim which shall please him
“ for the Future.”

But I have Charity enough for You, Be-
loved Auditors, to hope that You have
faithfully confess all your Sins, without
bringing-in Others as Parties concern'd to
lessen the Priest's Attention to your Guilt
at the Expence of their Characters. I will
believe that you have been penitent enough
to impeach No-Body but yourselves: And
that you have acknowledged your Crimes?
with a great deal of Sincerity. But then
shall I do you any Injury in suspecting that
you overlook many necessary Details relating
to the Circumstances of those Crimes?
What if you are, perhaps, a Churchman
or Statesman? Will it, think you, be suf-
ficient to accuse yourself as a Man of your
private Offences? No, no: There are the
Neglects of your public Duty: There are
your Breaches of public Trust: There are
the

the Sanctions, the Encouragements you have given to public Vice by your Ill-Example or Indolence: All which must be confest. Or It may be, that you are, Father, Mother, Guardian, Governor or Superior: Your private Faults then are but one Half of your Confession; and That, perhaps, the least Half. There are the Sins of the Head: Those Children uninstructed; those Servants ill-treated; those Inferiors oppress'd, or encouraged in Vice, or not provok'd to Virtue; those Orphans, those Subjects, that Society defrauded insulted tyrannized-over; the Honour, the Interests, the Harmony, the Happiness (general and particular) of that Body Civil or Religious, entrusted to your Government, and nevertheless neglected, injured, given-up betray'd, by your Self-Love, Ambition, Avarice, or Revenge, or scandalous Behaviour: All, all These, as well as your private Sins, and more than They, are necessary Matter of Confession. Are you Prelates, Judges, little Sovereigns in your own Estates? What are the Crimes of the Man in their Consequences to the Crimes of the Prelate, of the Judge, of the Prince? Ah! Little will your Confession avail, if to the Sins of your private Part of Life you neglect to add Those of the Prelate who has Ecclesiastics to animate with Zeal; of the Judge who has Justice to administer; of the Prince who has the Injured to right,
the

the Opprest to protect, the Worthy to reward, the Wicked to punish. That famous Emperor *Charles* the Fifth being once on a time on a Journey, unaccompanied with his Ordinary Confessor, presented himself at the Feet of the first Priest he met-with in a Town he pass'd-through on his Way: And, happily for him, this Worthy Ecclesiastic was One of those Faithful Dispensers who have no more Respect for Crimes under the Mantle of Royalty, than under the Rags of Mendicity. The Emperor having finish'd his Confession, it was a Charm to hear the Holy Confessor, without losing the Respect due to his Sovereign, thus assume with Intrepidity the Authority of the Director over his Penitent. " O CHARLES *he cries,*
 " every where else Emperor, here a Criminal! O *Charles,* Every where else my Sovereign, here my Pupil, my Child! Thy
 " Confession is not yet half made. Hitherto
 " Thou has't confest the Sins of *Charles*:
 " But what are the Sins of *Cæsar*? How
 " are your Provinces govern'd? How are
 " your Treasuries managed? Are your Re-
 " venues raised, with Equity or Oppres-
 " sion? How is your Court regulated?
 " Are your Nobles orderly or licentious?
 " Is Justice publicly administer'd with
 " Integrity or Partiality? Are public Grievances redrest? Are public Ministers
 " true to public Trust, and compell'd so
 " to

“ to be ? Are your Armies well disciplin’d
 “ in the Art of storming Heaven as well
 “ as a Town ? Is Merit rewarded ? Is Guilt
 “ chastised ? Is War never waged unjustly
 “ at the immense Profusion of innocent
 “ Blood ? Are foreign Dominions never in-
 “ vaded more upon Pretext than just Title ?
 “ More out of Ambition than Reason ?
 “ More from Arrogance or Revenge than
 “ from Necessity ? Are your own suffici-
 “ ently defended, improved and edified ?
 “ Is Piety promoted by your Example and
 “ Zeal ? And is Vice and Scandal suppress’d
 “ by your Vigilance and Wisdom ? These,
 “ these, O my Son, are Matters you have
 “ yet to clear-up, ere your Confession be
 “ compleat.” Charm’d, in fact, with such
 a noble Gospel Freedom, The pious
 Prince re-enter’d with a serious Recol-
 lection into his own Soul, and, sitting
 his Heart upon all This, came forth from
 the sacred Tribunal corrected amended and
 sensible of many Faults which till then
 he had never employ’d a single Thought
 upon : And departed so satisfied as to own,
 to Some of his Confidants, that “ till then
 “ he had never learnt the Art of making a
 “ good Confession.” Ah Christians ! Give
 me leave to speak thus to Many of You. You
 have confest the Sins of the Man, of the
 Woman : But where are the Sins of your
 State, of your Condition ? Why render the
 Confession

Confession of the former Offences fruitless by omitting to confess the Latter? You have confest the Sins you have committed yourselves: But why pass over in Silence the Sins you have made or suffer'd Others to commit, through the Abuse or Neglect of your Station? These Sins, as well as your own, you may reveal, without exposing your Neighbour, without telling the Name, or pointing-out the Person: Which is not to be done. Confession is not a Bar of Scandal: And therefore we are not to render it odious by exposing the Faults of a Neighbour, even to a Confessor: And a Confessor who knows his Duty will not suffer you to do it. Nay if Curiosity should tempt him to ask you the Names of Persons to whose Sins you confess yourselves accessory, you cannot without a Fault gratify him. But then you may easily, without offending against Charity, say: "I have by Oppressions, by my Counsel, by my Command, by my Example, by my Neglect, caused Others to commit this or that Sin." And where you have room to say it, 'tis a necessary Matter of Confession. Why are you to confess the Evil you have done by yourself or Others, and to stifle the Good you might and ought to have done, but did not do? Why not confess the doing Good a Month later than you could have done it? That you defer'd till To-mor-

row what should have been done To-day ? That You put-off to afterwards what should have been done immediately ?

All, all This should be confest : All this should be told, in order to confound the Dumb-Devil and put him to Flight. But ah how Few Christians are there who confess themselves thus ! Few, very Few indeed are the Penitents who thus approach to the Holy Sacrament of Confession. And therefore Small, very small, I fear, is the Number of Those who reap any considerable Benefit from Confession, who chase the Dumb-Devil effectually from their Hearts : While Many, very Many rather strengthen their own Chains and establish the Serpent's Tyranny over them, by continuing voluntarily Dumb, by speaking only by halves, or remaining mute in Action while they are loud in Words.

This brings me to mind the Mystical Lamentation of the Royal Penitent, where he says : *Because I kept Silence, my Bones are grown old, while I cried-out all the day long.* * But ! How shall we reconcile this seeming Paradox ? If he cried-out ; how could he keep Silence ? If he was silent ; how could he at the same time cry-out ? *Because I kept Silence --- while I cried-out ?* Is there any Consistency in This ? Yes, Beloved, yes : It is possible : It is more than possible ; for it is Fact, that Christians

too

* Psalm.
xxxi.

too often, at one and the same time, cry-out and keep Silence. He who cries not out as he ought, is noisily Dumb. To break silence effectually, our Actions must eccho to our Voice. The Man, who lies supine in a Quagg and calls-out for Help with his Tongue, but exerts not his Limbs in Concert with his Voice, breaks Silence but by Halves, is. (sensibly speaking) but a Dumb Crier. O how many Mutes in this Sense may we not number among Christians! How many Christians may we not reckon dumb in the very Act of Crying-out. Confession, on the Penitent's Side, is a Sort of commutative, vindictive Justice. On One hand, it is to restore to God that Glory which Sin took from him; on the Other, it is to revenge the Cause of God by not letting the Offender go unpunish'd. How then, Beloved, can the Dumb-Man be thought to cry-out to any Purpose: How can the Confession be compleat, where a Christian, contenting himself with fulfilling one of these two Offices of the Sacrament, neglects the Other? And O what grievous Abuses are not committed in this Part of Confession, call'd Satisfaction! How justly may we not now o'days liken the Penitential Confessions of the major Part of Christians to that fruitless Figg-Tree which provoked the Malediction of Christ? Since what are their Narratives in the Confes-

fional but so many lifeless Rehearsals ornamented with all the pompous Foliage of Repentance but barren of every Fruit. Ah! This Age, this Generation may boast, if it can be any Honour to it, of having brought the false Delicacy of Man's perverted Nature, to it's utmost Height. A Usurer shall go to Confession and accuse himself of having defrauded his Dealers, stript the Widow, robb'd the Orphan, oppress'd the Poor, and drain'd into his Coffers, the very Blood and Marrow of the honest Labourer. And the Confessor who knows his Duty shall only require in Satisfaction for all his crying Injustice that he restore the ill-accumulated Hoard: And what answer shall he have. " Alas
 " Father! The Penance is too grievous:
 " The Task is too hard: I cannot submit
 " to it." A Glutton a Drunkard, a Lecher, presents himself to a Confessor and acknowledges the Obscenity of his past Life. And the gentle prudent Director enjoins him, for the chief part of his Penance. " Go
 " and Sin no more, lest Something worse
 " befall Thee. Give to the Poor for the
 " Future the superfluous Sums hitherto
 " lavished in those luxurious Viands: Flee
 " from that Tavern, that Company, break-
 " off all Intercourse with that Accom-
 " plice." And can he prevail with the Penitent to acquiesce? Not at all: The
 Sins

Sins are confest : But not therefore re-
 nounced. “ I cannot, *the obstinate Mortal*
 “ *cries*, I shall be laugh’d-at, I shall be
 “ call’d inconstant, I shall be reduced to
 “ suffer some Difficulties or to renounce
 “ certain Conveniences. And who can
 “ resolve to do That?” A Gentleman
 perchance shall accuse himself at Confession
 of having made Gaming his whole Amuse-
 ment ; and perhaps the chief Commerce of
 Life ; of having (in spite of a virtuous
 Wife in Want and Affliction, in spite of
 Children in Ignorance and Danger of Ruin,
 and in spite of a Family left in the utmost
 Disorder) wasted his Days and even Nights
 in handling Cards and Dice or in rioting
 from one place to another ; and thus la-
 vish’d those Sums which would have been
 more justly as well as fruitfully laid-out
 in paying Servants their Hire, in discharg-
 ing Tradesmen’s Bills, and providing for
 the decent Support of his Family, for the
 Education of his Children : and the crying
 Necessities of the Poor. And the Con-
 fessor who is not willing to betray the
 Duties of his Function shall say to him :
 “ Child ! I suppose you to be sincerely
 “ sorry for, as well as sensible of, the
 “ Heinousness of living as you have done
 “ hitherto, in a manner so disedifying, so
 “ unbecoming your Rank in Life. I
 “ presume, by your confessing these Irre-
 “ gularities

“ gularities, that you are resolved to amend
 “ of them. You will be pleased then for
 “ the Future, by way of Penance, to re-
 “ trieve the Time you have lost and re-
 “ pair the Injury done to God, by ex-
 “ changing Cards and Dice for a spiritual
 “ Book, in which you may learn how to
 “ live a Life more worthy of a Disciple of
 “ Jesus Christ; by exchanging the riotous
 “ Dissipations of this or that Companion
 “ for edifying Lectures and Conversation
 “ in your own Family, from which, Your
 “ Wife, your Children, your Domestics,
 “ yourself may receive Instruction.” And
 what Effect has this Speech on the Peni-
 tent but to render him Refractory, and
 to convince his Director, that he was very
 wide of the Mark in taking this seeming
 Penitent for a real One? Or a Lady shall
 come all powder’d, all perfumed, to the
 Feet of a Priest, to accuse herself (if hap-
 pily She ever reaches to the forming a
 Scruple of it) that She has lavish’d the
 major Part of her Hours at the Glass, at
 Quadrille, at Assemblies, in Visits and Va-
 nities; whirling perpetually, like a Wea-
 ther-Vane, from Point to Point round the
 whole Compass of worldly Dissipations.
 “ Alas, *says her Director*, This is too
 “ much, Child. Too freely do you abuse
 “ the Divine Beneficence. God did not
 “ give you so much Time, that you might
 dedicate

“ dedicate to Him so slender a Part of
“ it. Ah! Reflect a little on the Horror
“ of idling-away, to the Dishonour of
“ your Divine Benefactor, so much Leisure
“ given you to work your own Salvation
“ in, and to seek his Glory. But take
“ Courage, notwithstanding what is past.
“ Look forward for the Future; and cast
“ your Eyes back no more on your former
“ Conduct, but to lament and bear it. Bare
“ as you are of all those Virtues which
“ would become you, as a Part of that
“ Half of the Creation which the Church
“ dignifies with the Title of the Devout
“ Sex; your gracious GOD is still ready,
“ with open Arms to receive you to his
“ Embraces. But to merit This, You will
“ be pleased for the Satisfaction of his
“ Justice, for your Sacramental Penance,
“ to shun that Frequency of idle Visits,
“ of profane Diversions, of dissipating Par-
“ ties; and devoutly retire within your
“ little Family to Prayer, to devout Lec-
“ ture, to catechizing your Children, in-
“ structing your Domestics, and putting
“ a little Order and Christian Decorum
“ in your Family.” *Ab Father! It can-*
not be done. Do you consider, that I shall
pass for a Devotee, be thought melancholily
mad, and may be after all become so indeed?
“ Well then throw aside at least that
“ superfluous Pomp of Apparel: Away with
“ all

“ all this dangerous expensive Vanity ;
 “ that you may be able to acquit your
 “ Stewardship faithfully towards the Poor,
 “ by sharing with them the Riches en-
 “ trusted with you for their Support.”

*Ab Father ! What do you mean ? Scarce
 have I enough to appear in a manner suitable
 to my Quality. Scarce can I afford to
 appear like the rest of the World in my
 Station : It cannot be done then, as you
 would have it. O Christians ? Is this going
 to Sacramental Confession ? Is this chasing
 the Dumb-Devil ? Is this breaking Silence
 to the Purpose, or not rather keeping
 Silence while you cry-out ? where is the
 Concert of Words and Actions in all
 this ? Where is the Satisfaction which is
 is due to God's injured Honour in such a
 fruitless Repetition of the Sins by which
 you robb'd him of his Glory ? Where is
 the Vindictive Justice which your Con-
 fession ought to effect ? And shall then
 the frequent Confessions made after this
 Manner be deem'd compleat Ones ? No,
 no : They cannot pass for such. They ab-
 solutely are not Such.*

Confession is a Tribunal erected by Di-
 vine Institution to supply, in the Church,
 the Place of God's Justice. “ The Holy
 “ Sacrament of Penance, *says Tertullian,*
 “ by pronouncing Chastisement against the
 “ Sinner is the Delegate of the Divine In-
 “ dignation.

“dignation.” And where is there a Tribunal so corrupt, where is there a Judge so inequitable as not to proceed to some Chastisement of a Criminal found Guilty, a Criminal condemn’d out of his own Mouth? To adore God as sovereignly Merciful, to confide in him as the Source of all Clemency, is good, is pious is excellent: But to want him to be unjust, to want him to shew Mercy at the Expence of his Equity, without any Satisfaction to his injured Honour either paid or offer’d, is wrong, is insolent, is impious: It is, in short, wanting God not to be God. And what less does the Penitent (if we can with any Propriety call him such) who, confessing himself an Offender, is unwilling to repair his Offence with a suitable Penance? Again, The Holy Sacrament of Penance was instituted by the Almighty as a sovereign Remedy against the Diseases of the Soul. Let us but observe some Sick Person overpower’d by the Rage of a Fever or the Torture of an Impostume or a Stone; and learn Wisdom from his Conduct. A Consultation is call’d for his Relief: Violent Remedies are propos’d for a violent Distemper; and how does he behave? Does he draw back? Does he storm? Does he fly-out against the Cure? No, no: Let him be cut, let be torn, let him be fear’d to the Quick: He submits. Let the most
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nauseous Draughts be presented to him, he swallows them. Let the sharpest Blisters be applied, let the most raging Caustics burn him, he endures them all. And He himself shall be the first to animate the trembling Nurse or daunted Surgeon to their Office. Health is the Object of his eager Hopes, and therefore softens every Pain. In short, as St. *Peter Chrysologus* says, "No Cure is intolerable to a Person whose Life is dear to him." Ah! Thus, thus is it too with every true unfeigned Penitent. He who approaches to Confession in a Spirit of serious Penance must love God, for the future, as much as He disregarded him for the past: He must detest himself, ever after, as much as he fondled himself before. Nay St. *Augustin* makes it the Definition of a perfect Penitent to have these two Qualities of Love for God and Hatred for himself. "A Penitent, *says He*, is a "Man angry with himself: And all Self-Anger is founded in Love, *that is*, in "Love for God." Who ever loved God, without suffering chearfully for God? Who ever hated himself sincerely, without treating himself with Rigour? Ah Christians! Believe me: The Man, who is truly Penitent of his Sins, thinks no Penance too severe which can repair the injured Honour of the God he loves; thinks no Punishment too heavy which can cleanse him of the

the Sins he confesses. I have indeed met with a Penitent, here and there, in this happy Disposition. O how ravish'd have I been with Joy to see an ancient Officer, of forty Years military Service, so innocent throughout Life as even to perplex me at a general Confession to find certain Matter for Absolution; and yet so oppress'd with an Excess of Confusion and Contrition for Imperfections, work-up, in his humble Imagination, to all the Horror of enormous Crimes, as with a Flood of Tears to reproach me, with submissive Remonstrances, for over Lenity in giving him a Penance, which the greatest Sinners of you, Christians, would perhaps think too exorbitant a Penalty! Ah! Who could forbear, at such a Scene, the melting into Tears of Tenderness? But ah! How Few have I met-with of such Penitents in Comparison of the Many, who, offering themselves at every Confessor's Feet, are like such fantastical Sick-Men, as send for the Physician to make him a Recital of their Pains and Distempers, but when he comes to prescribe a Remedy to their Evils, they grow restive, if not quite furious! Such, Beloved Auditors, such are the Gross Abuses committed in the Holy Sacrament of Penance, by which the Confessions of a Multitude of Christians are render'd not only invalid but often-times Sacrilegious, and for the

major Part at least fruitless? Such the Causes, why so Many Dumb-Men are not restored to the right Faculty of Speech; and, why the Dumb-Devil, instead of being cast out of their Hearts by the Sacramental Grace of Christ, establishes his Dominion over them more and more. It is time then that I proceed to point-out to you the Causes of these Causes, the Principles of these Abuses, and the Means of removing them.

II. It is absurd to expect, that a Man should go to Confession with any truly Penitential Spirit, without being thoroughly acquainted with his inward State; nor can he be desirous to punish himself or accept of Punishment, without being Sensible of his Guilt, displeased with it, and resolute to break with it. This requires then a previous serious Examen of Conscience, a deep Sorrow, and a steady Determination: These then are necessary, indispensably necessary Preparations for a good Confession: And therefore by casting an Eye on the usual Method of applying to these Preparations among modern Christians, we shall immediately find-out the real Causes of the little Fruit they now reap from the Holy Sacrament of Penance. And what is the Examen of Conscience now in use? Why---- A Christian shall have had the Courage to stay
away

away from the Holy Sacraments for several Months together, swelling the Number of his Sins beyond that of his Days: The Eve of some solemn Festival comes: And, invited by the pious Pomp of the Season, or by the Example of the devout Part of the Faithful, or perhaps by a certain Something of Sensitive Inclination which prompts him to do as Others do, He resolves to go to Confession. Now judge You, if, with his Thoughts so little in Order, he has not a hard Task to surmount before he can regulate his Accounts of so many Hours, Days, nay Weeks, totally wasted in the licentious Courses of an unbridled Libertinage? Judge you, how a Memory ever so happy, ever so vigorous can avoid being lost and bewilder'd in the darksome Maze of so many Vices. Ah what Difficulty will he not have to districate himself from so many knotty Perplexities, so many Intrigues, such a Confusion of complicated Crimes! Who can help compassionating him beforehand? But why so? On the contrary, Observe but with what incredible Ease he dispatches the Affair. One Quarter of an Hour's Recollection Suffices to conquer every Difficulty, and to clear-up to him faithfully and distinctly all the Sins of the Whole Year. But what! A Quarter of an Hour? And can so little suffice to reckon-up a Multitude of Sins,
the

the Variety of aggravating Circumstances attending them, and the Difference of their Species, the Mischiefs of their Consequences? So little is required and no more? Justly then may we liken a Christian who examines his Conscience to a Man who surveys himself in a Glass. Whoever beholds his Person in a Glass, sees himself, it is true; but sees himself all together. A Mirror is a momentary Painter shewing us to ourselves, not Part by Part. It does not delineate first the Head, then the Heart, then the Arms, the Neck, the Dress and so on: But all in a Groupe throws us out just as we appear before it. Such is the Talent too of those Examinations of Conscience now so rife among Christians. And We may compare almost every modern Penitent *to a Man beholding the Countenance of his Nativity in a Glass. He consider'd himself, and went his Way, and bye-and-bye*

**S. James forgot what a One he was ** He has seen his Sins, but seen them in a Groupe, if not perhaps barely the very first Out-lines of them; and content with this, without farther Labour or Anxiety, carries his shapeless ill-digested Matter to the Feet of a Confessor. And is This, O Christians, to be call'd a penitential Examen of your Consciences. No, Beloved, no: It is a gross Mistake. To examin yourselves thoroughly, you must go more seriously to work: Your
Memory

Memory must proceed with solicitous Leisure, and look through your past Life, part by part. It must scrutinize every Thought of Pride, of Lust, of Envy, of Rancour, of Idleness, of Impiety: It must call to Account every Word of Falshood, of Pique, of Detraction, of Scandal: It must summon before it every Action of Injustice, of uncharitableness, of Scandal: It must search into all the Occasions of Stumbling, remote as well as near, which have not been avoided: At what Time, in what Place, with what Company, by what Means, on what Account or Conjunction so many, so great, and so various Offences have been consented to and perpetrated against God. Let every Penitent then who is truly Such, erect in his Mind a Tribunal, which may be beforehand with That of the Divine Justice: Thither let him cite every Fault he has committed: There let him search it, let him question, let him put it to the Rack for the Discovery of it's Enormity: And there, in a word, fulfilling the Part of an attentive impartial Judge, and, managing the Cause with severest Nicety, let him forestall God's Sentence, snatching the Rod of Rigour from the Almighty's Hand, and force his infinit Clemency to pronounce a full Absolution in the Words of a St. *Augustin*: " Even let us spare Man
" because he has not spared himself."

Yet

Yet ah how fruitless, I fear, will not this Counsel prove! Where shall we find a Penitent thus rigid with his Sins?

It is not, that I doubt in the least but what Many Christians use some Sort of Endeavours to search for their Sins. But alas! too much Reason have to fear, that the major Part accompany their Search for their Sins, with the Desire of not finding them: And hence is it, that they suffer their Passions, their most corrupted Appetites, to live in perfect undisturbed Tranquillity: In this, not unlike the senseless *Laban*. When *Jacob* departed with his Substance and Wives from his ungenerous Father-in-Law *Laban*, *Rachel* the *Gentil's* Favourite Daughter robb'd him of his Idols and carried them off with her. When the Old Man miss'd them mounting on his Steed, he pursues the Robbers: And, coming-up with *Jacob*, furiously reproaches him: *Why has't thou stolen my Gods?* * *Jacob* pleads Innocence of the Matter; and *Laban*, more irritated than ever, alights, searches and re-searches, topsy-turvyng all the Furniture in the Tents of his Son-in-Law, of his Daughter *Liah*, and of the Hand-maids; but all in vain: His Gods are not there. *Having enter'd into the Tent of Jacob and of Liah and of both the Hand-maids, he found them not.* † It was no difficult Matter then for *Laban* to perceive, as well by the

* *Genesis*
xxxi.

† *Ibid.*

the Change of her Countenance, which without help of Words pronounced her Guilty, as by the Posture She sat in, that his artful Plunderer was his Favorit *Rachel*; that *Rachel*, in a word, was actually secreting the Idols She had robb'd him of. And nevertheless he never so much as attempts to search her. And why not? Ah! It is because *Rachel* is his Favorit: "*Rachel* is his Darling, best-beloved Doating-Piece, *says a venerable Expofitor*, and "therefore is he afraid to disturb her." O how many *Labans*, dear-loved Auditors! How many *Labans* are there not, in the Midst of Christianity, who, for Fear of disturbing a favorit Passion, under the Wing of which some vicious Idol of their Souls is secreted, either search not, or search with such Fear of finding as is worse than not searching at all! You, O Young Man, have search'd your Conscience; and, in searching, your Conscience has call'd out to you: "O that *Billet-doux*," preserved with so much Tendernefs amidst the choicest of your Rarities, and read every now and then with so much inward Revolution of Heart, so much Fluctuation of sensitive Spirits, so much Disorder of your Thoughts! "But alas! What Evil, "*you cry*, can be in This? 'Tis affectionate "and yet modest. 'Tis written with the "Pen of Delicacy itself, and has never yet
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" hurt me. Thanks to Heaven, my Heart is
 " yet free. What Harm then can there be,
 " in reading it sometimes: And much more
 " where can the Sin be in keeping it in
 " my Possession?" O Lady! Have You
 ever at your Examen of Conscience re-
 flected on that Miniature lock'd-up with
 such tender Care in your Scrutore? " And
 " what Occasion for Reflection? It is a
 " Picture done by an excellent Hand: It
 " is a Master-Piece: It is decent to the
 " utmost. And can there then be Harm
 " in gazing on a Picture? What tho' the
 " Original may have fired my Countenance,
 " can these lifeless Colours bring any Pre-
 " judice to my Innocence?" Tell me;
 Do your Eyes, never in beholding raise a
 Sedition in your Heart? " Yes: But still,
 " thanks to the Divine Grace, I remain
 " Mistress of myself." And what Surety
 have you, Either of you, that, presuming
 thus on the Divine Grace, you shall long
 continue to maintain that Superiority you
 trust-to so injudiciously? O Lawyers! O
 Merchants! O Tradesmen! There are cer-
 tain Articles in your Accounts which are not
 so just as they should be, even according
 to your own way of Reckoning; and
 much less according to That of God: Yet
 are there Many Years, that you have gone-
 on confessing every Mouth, and these
 Articles are still left in Oblivion. " But to
 " adjust

“ adjust them rightly it would quite break
“ through the Oeconomy of our lucrative In-
“ terests. Our Quiet requires that we should
“ never think of them.” O Christian *La-*
bans ! How solicitous are you in searching,
not to find what you search for !” O *Rachels* !
O Favorit Passions ! How many Idols do
you conceal ! How many Sins are left un-
search’d-for, or are examin’d but super-
ficially, for fear of disturbing You ! Yet
search you must, Beloved Faithful : You
must search with Eagerness to find-out,
not only your Sins, but all your Attach-
ments to Them : You must endeavour to
discover, not so much the Idols alone which
are hidden in your Hearts, but still more
the Passions which conceal them. And
then I will allow you to be in earnest in
your Examen, then I will acknowledge
you to be serious Penitents, Penitents in-
deed.

But Some of You will tell me, perhaps,
that you have no irregular Passions ; and
therefore, tho’ so much Exactitude may
be requisit for People of vehement Dis-
positions, yet you may live quiet without
taking such a deal of Pains in your Examen.
What Christians ! You without disorderly
Passions ? Are you then insensible to Love, to
Hatred, to Envy, to Jealousies, to Piques, to
Suspensions ? You without Passions ? Whence
then comes that secret Transport of Joy at
T 2 the

the Sight of a certain Person? That gnawing Discontent, when that Other is well-spoken-of, advanced, or esteem'd? You without Passions? Search, *I say once more*, search your Consciences to the Bottom: And you will find but too evidently that you have scarce any Thing else. "Alas I have examin'd myself over and over: And yet for my part scarce can I find sufficient Matter to compleat a Confession." Is it possible? O that it was not more probable, that your Indigence is the Effect of Plenty, and that the only Reason why you cannot find Sins in yourselves is that the Multitude of them perplexes your Attention and puzzles you about where to begin! Ambition, Avarice, Luxury and Revenge are now the four Elements which govern the Pursuits of a Christian World; and Christians find no Sins to confess? Lust of Power, Lust of Riches, Lust of Pleasures, Lust of Praise, divide their Empire equally over the rational Creation. Every-One is now for fixing the Character of Man, of Honour, of Worth, of Integrity to such sinister Pursuits of Sensuality as the modish Iniquity of the Age gives Countenance to: Every-One is for making a Figure at Balls, at Entertainments, at Assemblies, at every profane Theatre, with the Patrimony which should pass to their Posterity, woven into costly Habits, melted

melted into expensive Dishes, or wrought into extravagant Equipages: Every-One is for over-topping every Equal in Smartness of Speech, in the Caprices of Fashion, in the Licentiousness of Life. The very Word of God, so awful, so sacred, so salutary, is now become the Instrument of Witticism, the Zest of a Joke, the Salt of a Double-Entendre: And the sacred Sacrifice of the Altar is reduced, even among Christians who pass for well disciplin'd, to be Matter of Assignment: How many of them go to it by Appointment; go to it by way of Custom; go to it to shew or learn Fashions; to meet a Friend, to shew a Courtesy or Resentment, or to pass an Hour agreeably in good Company. Else why should a Noon Paryers, the last Plank for Quality-Sloth, have a more crouded splendid Audience than all the foregoing Prayers of the Day? Every-where Game is going forward: Sporting is promoted: Frauds, Calumny, Riots, Licentious Practices are encouraged and carried-on, in Closets in Assemblies, in the Streets, in every Place and in every Season; not even the Sanctuary is free from these Excesses, not the sacred penitential Time of *Lent*. All These are diametrically opposit to the practical Duties of every Christian. All These are committed by Christians: and yet are Christians puzzled to find Sins to accuse

accuse themselves of? Ah! Too many and too frequent are the Sins committed by Every Christian. Too plainly do they shew themselves in the Irregularity of our Lives: Too severely do we feel the Weight of them in the Indignation of Heaven bursting on our Heads: And still are they not known to us? Ah! What can be the Occasion of so obstinate a Blindness. The Case is, that the Licentiousness of our Lives darkens our Intellects: The Case is, that our Self-love lessens to our Observation the Load which oppresses us: The Case is, that the Interests and Conveniences of a flattering World intercept our Attention: The Case is, that we are loth to survey them with piercing Lights, and renouncing our own Lights we even shun the Advice of Men of Penetration who might help us to hunt our lurking Vices out of their hiding Holes: The Case is, in short, that we affect Ignorance and are unwilling to find-out what we are unresolved to amend. Our Sins therefore must not be examin'd-into; because once they are found-out, the fatal Discovery would disturb our darling Diversions. We must give-up those dangerous Friendships; we must renounce those dissipating Entertainments; we must throw-up this Post, that Charge, which yields to us with a considerable earthly Lucre, a much more considerable Sum of Iniquity.

But

But O Dearest Fellow-Christians! Let me by the tender Love I bear you, conjure you to throw-off this voluntary Blindness. Examine, I conjure, examine your Consciences, like serious Penitents, if you seriously wish to be penitent. Examine your very Examinations hitherto made. Examine the Examination you shall make for your next *Easter* Devotion. Examine with the Desire of probing to the utmost Depth of your spiritual Wounds. Who knows but such a new Diligence may discover to you all that Corruption which has hitherto kept you in so gross a Self-Ignorance and may force you to cry-out, with the perfect Repentance of a DAVID: " O my GOD what a Gangrene, what a Mass of Corruption, have not my Sins bred within me, for want of looking into them seriously and in Time! O wretched Folly of Mine! O the Madness, to let the Evil run to such a Length, without applying a Remedy! While *my Sores are putrified and corrupted because of my Foolishness.*" *

* Psalm xxxvii.

Many, you see Christians, are the Errors committed in the Examination of Conscience. But ah! still many more are the Mistakes, and much greater Ones, which Christians fall-into, their Examination made and even rightly made: Mistakes which relate not to the Want of Knowledge of our Sins, but to the Defect of Sorrow for them. O Beloved!

* Jerem.
viii.

Beloved! Too well do I know, that what I have yet to say will appear frightful: And I own it terrible enough to intimidate stouter Hearts than yours. But still how can I love you as tenderly as myself and not communicate to you the dread I feel at the Words of my indignant God to modern Penitents: But Words did I say? Rather are they Bolts of penetrating Thunder: *I have attended*, says the Lord, *I have attended and hearken'd: There is No-One who doth Penance for his Sin, saying, what have I done.* * What, my God! Is there No-One, who does Penance, say'st Thou? Absolutely *No-One*? Ah! What then are so many Christians doing on every First Sunday of the Month, on every solemn Festival? What are those Throngs of pensive Sinners about, who, crouding the confessionals, so rudely strike their penitential Breasts and mournfully cry-out, "*Peccavi*: I have sinn'd, through "*my own Fault*, through my most grievous "*Fault*?" Are None of these doing Penance in good earnest? "No, not One: "*There is No-One who does Penance for his Sin.* That Tribe of Self-Accusers "*have not a true Sorrow: Their Sorrow is* "*all Fiction: A Lie of the Eyes: They* "*weep indeed; but their Tears are like* "*the Tears of Marble moisten'd by South-* "*westerly Winds. Part of them go to* "*Confession*

“ Confession out of Custom, Part of them
 “ to save Appearances: Part of them again
 “ are led thither by a certain sensitive
 “ Compunction, the abortive Brat of a mo-
 “ mentary Remorse. But Few very Few
 “ touch'd by a lively lasting Sorrow. In
 “ short, It is a prevaricating Generation,
 “ who is neither sorry for having sinn'd,
 “ nor sorry for not having the Sorrow they
 “ ought to have. *The Prevaricatress bath*
 “ *not return'd to me in her whole Heart,*
 “ *but in Falsehood, saith our Lord.*” * * Jerem.
viii.

Nor is there in this Reasoning of the Almighty any Thing hyperbolical, or merely emphatical. No: It is pure and simple and full of Moderation, as we must see, if we do but form to ourselves a right Idea of the Sorrow requisit to true Repentance. For let us consider this Sorrow as the Effect of our Fears of Hell, or of our Desires of Heaven, and call it *Attrition*: Or let us consider it as the Fruit of a generous Love for God and call it *Contrition*: Still must it be a Sorrow of Heart, a Sorrow of the whole Soul. This Sorrow, if we may believe a St. *Augustin*, must give the Soul as much Torture as Sin afforded Pleasure to the Sense. This Sorrow, according to St. *Bernard*, must rouse in the Penitent such a vigorous Wrath against himself as shall awake in God a Tenderness for the afflicted Sinner, which may soften and

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appease the just Indignation He had conceived against him. This Sorrow, says the Holy Pope *Gregory*, must reach even to exasperate the Penitent against Sin with implacable Hatred; and to charm him with a sincere and unconquerable Love of Virtue. But, to omit the innumerable Explanations of the Holy Fathers and Councils, and confine ourselves to the bare genuin Sense of the Words *Contrition* and *Attrition*, that is, a *Rending* or *Breaking in Pieces*: This Sorrow should rend, should tear in Pieces, should dissolve with Anguish the very Heart of the Penitent. Come then, O Christian Penitents: Give what Account you can of the Sorrow you have hitherto felt. Can you say, that you have experienced Any-thing in your past Confessions which seem'd big with These Fruits? Did you feel any such bitter Anguish; any such painful Rendings of Heart; any such raging Self-detestation; any such implacable Hatred to Vice; any such melting, tender Love for Virtue? If you did not feel These; how can you flatter yourselves that you had any real Sorrow? If you felt them; how comes it that you have given no outward Signs of them in the Change of your Lives? Ah Beloved Children! Let but an enormous Nail be lodged in a Tree and pierce it to the Sap; and soon shall you perceive that the Heart of the noble Plant is wounded.

Strait

Strait do the Verdant Honours of it's Foliage decay; Each gaudy Leaf grows yellow; Each Blossom faintly flowers-out without the Seeds of vegetable Life; and the un-ripen'd Fruit (if Any rises into Form) falls rotten from the withering Stem. So let a real penitential Sorrow but pierce the Soul in earnest; and who may not perceive that It is wounded? Farewell then to Poms; Farewell to Diversions; Farewell to dissipating Company, to Entertainments and splendid Equipages. The Soul, all intent on ruminating the Gall of it's own Grief, can furnish Attention, Memory, Life, for Nothing, but, for the killing Thought of having sinn'd. Unquiet, disturb'd and restless, it revolves itself, this way and that, towards the various Objects which help'd It to offend it's God; and always with Horror, ever with Anguish and Detestation. " O
" that House! O that unhappy Creature!
" O that fatal Praise, that sordid Interest,
" that deceitful Show of Pleasure! O that
" Company, that Occasion which led me
" to wound myself, to wound my Jesus
" whom I ought to love more than myself!
" O wretched Remembrance! And yet do
" I live? Yet am I not dead with Shame?
" Yet will not this Heart burst and be dis-
" solved with Grief?" Dear-loved Auditors
of mine! Who among You, with all the
Sorrows you have felt in so many Con-
U 2 fessions,

appease the just Indignation He had conceived against him. This Sorrow, says the Holy Pope *Gregory*, must reach even to exasperate the Penitent against Sin with implacable Hatred; and to charm him with a sincere and unconquerable Love of Virtue. But, to omit the innumerable Explanations of the Holy Fathers and Councils, and confine ourselves to the bare genuin Sense of the Words *Contrition* and *Attrition*, that is, a *Rending* or *Breaking in Pieces*: This Sorrow should rend, should tear in Pieces, should dissolve with Anguish the very Heart of the Penitent. Come then, O Christian Penitents: Give what Account you can of the Sorrow you have hitherto felt. Can you say, that you have experienced Any-thing in your past Confessions which seem'd big with These Fruits? Did you feel any such bitter Anguish; any such painful Rendings of Heart; any such raging Self-detestation; any such implacable Hatred to Vice; any such melting, tender Love for Virtue? If you did not feel These; how can you flatter yourselves that you had any real Sorrow? If you felt them; how comes it that you have given no outward Signs of them in the Change of your Lives? Ah Beloved Children! Let but an enormous Nail be lodged in a Tree and pierce it to the Sap; and soon shall you perceive that the Heart of the noble Plant is wounded.

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essions, ever felt any Thing like This? Which of you ever addrest yourselves in Words like These? With what a Countenance have you hitherto thrown yourselves at your Confessor's Feet? With what Tears have you bathed the enormous Catalogue of your Offences? With what Fervor have you set about renewing your Spirit? With what Horror have you look'd upon the Occasions of Sin? O Heavens! what Disorders do I not see? How often do I see you enter the Confessionals, thence to pass to the Sacred Banquet of JESU's Body and Blood, with those very Gaieties and gaudy Trappings, which you could at worst but go deck'd-in to a profane Entertainment? When every Dictate of Decorum would require you to enter there in an humble, tho' decent, Garb. I hear you declare your Sins, in the same Tone as you would a Fable. I hear you palliate your former Faults with fresh Ones; " Father, I accuse myself of
" this Sin or that: But it is not so much
" my Fault as the Fault of that Person,
" by Name, who provoked me, who temp-
" ted me, who made me sin. Or Father,
" I accuse myself of having told a Lie by
" way of Excuse: But to alleviate that
" Lie with another; please to hear the
" Excuse of this Excuse. I was forced to tell
" it, to hinder Such-a-One from swearing,
" from cursing, from being in a Passion."
Ah

Ah Hypocrisy! Can there be real Sorrow in defaming Others to palliate our own Iniquity? Can He be a truly contrite Penitent, who confesses his Sins, not to humble himself but to expose Others? And yet how many such Confessions are heard! How many such Penitents seen! Ah Christians! How many of you even bring to the Tribunal of Penance your Perfumes, your Vanities, your Fopperies and Coquetteries, your giddy or solemn Airs, your Haughtiness, your Insolencies and Impertinences! Scarce do you breathe a Sigh there; scarce do you spend a Tear: To see you blush or turn pale, to see you faint or tremble would be Matter of Surprise: And yet do you pretend to have Sorrow? And yet do you steal Absolution from your deceived Confessor? Ah! I should not have thought, that there could be a Sorrow so genteel, that there could be so modish and easy a Method of Penance: At least in all the Disciplin of Christ I have never found any thing of this Sort.

But there is one Reason which weighs with me more than all Others to convince me, that the Sorrow of Many Christians who approach to the Holy Sacrament of Penance is but a hypocrite Sorrow: And That is, the seeing so very little Sincerity and Steadiness in the good Purposes they make in Confession; the finding so little Amendment in their Manners after Confession;

fection; the observing no Improvement in
 Virtue; the remarking, in short, so many
 lamentable Relapses. Hear how firmly the
 Great *Tertullian* speaks: " There Penance
 " is necessarily vain, where no Amend-
 " ment follows." Ah my Dear Penitent!
 Are you then resolved, *say you*, to repair
 all your former Mistakes? How do I not
 fear, that the secret Affections of your Heart
 are not in perfect Agreement with the peni-
 tential Disposition of your Tongue! You
 promise, no more to pursue Revenge, no
 more to yield to the Incentives of the Flesh,
 no more to be carried away by Intempe-
 rance, Injustice, Ambition, Avarice. But
 your Heart in the mean time full-well
 knows, that you will go-on doing for the
 future, what you profess to repent of
 having done for the past. You have fre-
 quented bad Company, gone in search of
 sinful Occasions, given Way to dangerous
 Curiosities, promoted Conversations offen-
 sive to Modesty: You have confessed all this
 and firmly purpose in Words to flee all
 these Dangers: But are you not in your
 Hearts at the same time doubtful, whether
 you shall go in search of them again the
 very Evening after your Communion? You
 kept not the last *Lent*; but then you pro-
 mised last *Easter* to keep the *Lent* we are
 in. However you have since then found
 fresh Pretexts not to keep the Present.
 For

For Many Years you have suffer'd Intemperance to govern you: And now again the Season of Compunction revolves, and you insist afresh that you absolutely will reform. But why so resolute? What Assurances do you give me, that to this new Promise You will not be as unfaithful as You all along have proved to Those you repeatedly made in so many former Confessions? Or do you not even, perhaps, secretly cherish in your Souls a moral Certainty of returning to your next Confession loaded with the same Sins the same specific Guilt, which you come burden'd with to This, and which you now think you are sorry for? And can you hope then to make me believe that these Sins, this Guilt are Matter of Sorrow to you?

Have you never seen a Woman in Sorrow for the treacherous Assassination of a dear-loved Husband? The very Sight of the fatal Instrument which executed the barbarous Deed shall make her swoon. Shew her but the empurpled Shirt, or Vest or other Garment which first received the dire Stroke: But point-out to her the melancholy Spot, where the lamented Victim fell in breathless Agonies, yet colour'd with his Blood; and She too shall drop quite lifeless in your Arms with the Excess of over-whelming Sorrow. Whole Months, whole Years are past from the cruential Period which commenced her

her Widow-hood, and She still keeps irreconcilably averse from Every-One from every Thing which is in Tye or Correspondence with the detested Murderer. Wife, Children, Friends and Family; and even the Name of the cruental Enemy, are all Matter of equal Horror to her. And the bare Memory of the outrageous Fact is so insufferable as seemingly to hurry her exasperated Soul out of itself. In vain does all the Priesthood, with the Gospel, with the Crucifix in hand, endeavour to sooth her into Peace. No, no: Nothing less will appease her Grief than the Glut of Revenge; the Offender must bleed, must die, must be destroy'd. But why all this implacable Rage? Why? Her hatred is implacable because her Grief is insupportable. The Excess of her Rage is the Effect of her Excess of Sorrow. You, Beloved, would fain persuade me that you are in real Grief for having offended for having sinn'd: And truly if your Grief has the Symptoms I have just been speaking of, I will allow it to be sincere. Sin then has assassinated, not your Dearest Friend only, but the Dearest nearest Part of yourself, your precious Soul itself, and has widow'd you of the Divine Grace. And You, exasperated against the guilty Traitor, have promised in many a Confession to punish it; have vow'd an implacable Hatred to it; and

and to persecute it above all other Evils even to Destruction. But what Hatred have you shewn to it? What but a sham Hatred could yours be; if your spiritual Wounds still bleeding, you have made Peace with Iniquity, enter'd into League with Sin, and hugg'd Vice to your Breast as your Darling Idol? Should a Woman in the Circumstance above-mention'd, within a few Days after, nay within a few Years, nay ever at all, consent to wed the Butcher of her lamented Love: who would not say, who would not think and justly think, that her former Tears cost her Nothing? Would not Every-One have a Colour to pronounce, that her seeming Rage was all Grimace, that her Transports of Fury were all the Work of Deceit, and that her pretended Sorrow never penetrated farther than her Eyes? Ah Christians! Neither must You then expect any more favourable Judgment from the Fathers of the Church, while, pretending to have Sorrow for your Sins, you are wedded to them. "You profess Yourselfes Penitents, *says the Great* " *St. Jerom*; give me leave then to enquire, for I am desirous to know, what " it is you repent of?" You loved the Amusements of the Stage heretofore; and do you now like evangelic Sermons better? You delighted one while in Ridottos and Assemblies: Do you now delight less in

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them and more in the Air of a Church or a Chapel? You used to take Pleasure only in profane Entertainments: Is your chief Pleasure now in the Holy Banquet of Divine Communion? Do you at present love Retirement and Piety as well as you have loved Rioting and Dissipation? Have Modesty and Composure taken Place of the Vanity and Levity you were so fond of? Have you at last declared an endless War against Passion, Pride, and worldly Punctilio to establish a deathless Peace with Humility and Meekness? If you have not; how can you pretend to have Sorrow? If your Purposes are languid, and, like unsubstantial Smoak, no sooner raised than evaporated; what can your Sorrow be but Fiction and Pretence? You may form Ideas, and flatter yourselves as you please: But, for my Part, I cannot think otherwise than with St. *Jerom*, that he only deserves the Name of a Penitent, who resolutely abhors, not only his past Guilt, but all future Occasions of Guilt. “ Him, *says the Venerable Father*, “ Him (and Him only) I call a Penitent, “ who now detests what he once loved.”

Thus far then, O beloved Christians, You have seen the Abuses committed in the Holy Sacrament of Penance, by which the Confessions of a Multitude of Christians are render'd, not only invalid, but oftentimes sacrilegious, and for the most Part at

at least fruitless. I have shewn you the principal Causes of such Abuses, and have shewn you by Apposition, the Means to remove them. The remaining Task is yours, to render this Lesson useful in Practice. What remains then for me to do more than to conclude? Accordingly let me conclude with addressing myself, in the first place, to You, my Dear Loved Penitents. O precious Souls of Christ entrusted to my Care! By all which is due to God and dear to You, I conjure you, without Delay, to examin into all your past Confessions: And if You find among them One less perfect, less exact, than It should be; repair the important Evil with a general Confession. And let it be your fix'd Determination henceforth, never to set about a Work so solemn and so sacred without a serious fervent Application. After all, Heaven is a fine Kingdom to possess: After all, God is too bounteous a Sovereign to deserve being slighted: After all, the Immortal Soul is too valuable a Being to be lost for want of a little Pains. To purchase the First then, to be grateful to the Second, to secure the Salvation of the Last, can we be too diligent? No, Christians, never: No Diligence, no Industry can be superfluous, can be extraordinary, can be too-much, to attain to Three such important Ends. And now, with all due Respect, a

Word to You, revered Directors of the Flock of Christ. You well know, that the Disorders I have here set forth, tho' perhaps but in a disorderly Manner, are not mere Speculations, mere metaphysical Suppositions, but Facts, rank Facts, which stare, daily stare your sacred Function in the Face; which, spite of all your pastoral Care, are every day committed. Ah! help then the erring Sheep into the Way. Those sinful Souls, who present themselves before you, the lovely JESUS hands along, till he commits them to your Care: And the most Guilty of them are Those he recommends to you with the most anxious Tenderness. The same JESUS stands nigh at hand in eager Expectation, that you present back to him, adorn'd like amiable Spouses, Those whom he brought to You and brought as odious Enemies. The same JESUS waits to receive them into his Bosom, when dismiss from your Hands. Ah! Never frustrate then his gracious Purpose through any Want of Care on your Side. Let him not prepare in vain a Festival of Joy in Heaven. Remember, that You are Every-One accountable Soul for Soul for each single Sinner under your Direction. Do You then exert your Industry to unfold their Examen for them, where necessary. Do You endeavour to invigorate their Repentance. Do you remove their Incon-

stancy,

stancy, overthrow their Presumption and animate their Fears. Be full of Tenderneſs be full of Fortitude. Remember that, when JESUS ſent your Predeceſſors to unloofe the Colt (that natural Emblem of a Sinner) he was not content with bidding them unloofe it; but commanded them to bring it to himſelf. *Unloofe it, ſays he, and lead it unto me.* * Thus much does JESUS ſay ^{*St. Matth} alſo to You, concerning every ſinful Soul ^{xxi.} under the Power of thoſe Keys he has committed to You: *Unloofe it and bring it to me.* Many, I know, are the Directors who are ready enough to unloofen: Would to Heaven They were not ſo Many, in ſome Places! Or elſe would to God, that of the Many who unloofe, They were not ſo very Few who lead to God the Souls they unloofe! Not that I doubt of your Vigilance, or mean to attribute, O vigilant Miniſters of Chriſt, to any Negligence of Yours, that you do not lead All to Heaven whom you unbind upon Earth. No: You know the Conſequences of ſuch a Neglect too well to be guilty of it. You know that the leaſt Flattery ſhewn to the Vanities, the Corruption, the Luſts the Injuſtices, the Enormities of the Age would be a Treachery againſt the Holineſs of your Function. You know that an Abſolution pronounced with Levity, inſtead of leading your Wards to JESUS would lead them, with

with You at the head, to endless Perdition. But how, Christians, shall your Directors lead You, by sacramental Penance, to Your God; if You impose on them a false Sorrow for a Real-One; a faint Purpose for a Resolution; a Half Confession for a whole One; or a whole Narrative of Sins unaccompanied with a Disposition to atone for Them? Unless you approach to them with all the Dispositions of Sorrow, Steadiness, Sincerity and Vindictive Justice becoming a true Penitent, How shall They be able to cast the Dumb-Devil out of You? Without These Dispositions you will never speak, or will never speak to any Purpose; and, instead of departing from the Foot of your Confessor free'd from the Power of Satan, you will depart more absolutely enslaved by him than ever. Go then at this Holy Season to your Directors in a new Spirit, in a Spirit of true Penance; that it may be said of Every-One of You as it was of the Mute in our Gospel: *JESUS was casting-out a Devil and It was a Dumb-One: And when the Devil was cast-out the Dumb-Man spoke and the Crouds were astonish'd.* Apply the next time to Confession in such a Manner as that the Reformation wrought in you may raise in every Christian Observer an Admiration of virtuous Envy. But O my crucified Saviour! Unless Thou lend thy gracious Aid, The
Mutes

Mutes will not speak; or, if they speak, they will speak but by halves, they will speak to no Purpose: If Thou art not present with thy Grace; the Devil will not depart, or will depart only to bring back with him seven other Devils worse than himself to make the wretched Penitent's latter End worse than the Former: If Thou do not Assist; we shall neither be able to unloose the Sinners, nor to bring them to Thee. O! Thou then lend them Knowledge to comprehend the Number and Heinousness of their Sins: Thou afford them the Constancy to abhor Them: Thou bestow on them the Resolution to amend them, the Courage to atone for them, the melting Sorrow to bewail them. O grant them Tears to wipe them off. Tears O Divine *Moses*, I implore thee in the Name of this penitential Audience, grant us Tears; strike the unyielding Rocks of these relentless Hearts and bid such Floods of Grief gush-forth, as, drowning us for a while in a Sea of penitential Anguish, may purify our Souls and fit them for enjoying Thee in the eternal Mansions of thy Glory. Which I beseech God, &c. *In the Name, &c.*

Third INDICATION of the PASSION.

JESUS the lovely loving JESUS, Life of our lives and Saviour of our Souls, was breathing-

breathing-out his precious Life in Agonies of Torture on the Summit of *Calvary*; when, tho' the Elements and all Nature in Agreement were dissolving with mournful Resentment, Mankind, as if no Part of Nature, was alone insensible to all the tender Emotions of Grief or Compassion. Nay all the Influence, which the cruel Sufferings of this innocent Lamb had upon the brutal Multitude who beheld him, was to urge them basely to add to the Bitterness of his Pains the Aggravation of blasphemous Gibes and Revilings. An humble *Centurion* was the only One, out of so numerous an Assemblage of Men, who, possess'd with a better Soul, confess'd him for the Son of GOD. *Truly this was the Son of GOD.* For my Part it staggers me, some-how, with Astonishment, that, even at the Foot of the Cross itself, such opposit Sentiments should find a Place. Nor can I of myself comprehend, why One should adore the Wounds of this crucified Lord, and yet Others should gall those very Wounds with fresh Impieties. But the sacred Text itself puts an end to my Surprise, by relating the Fact and then adding the Reason. After all, what wonder is it, that the inhuman Populace should blaspheme our Redeemer? They beheld him but with cursory wandering Looks: *Passing by, says the Evangelist, they blasphemed*

blasphemed him: But the Centurion? O! the Centurion *stood over-against him*, says the Divine Writer. Yès immoveable, in front of the Cross, facing the crucified JESUS, he consider'd every Sore; told-over, one by one, his Bruises; and counted every Wound his busied Eyes could reach to: And therefore was it that every Drop of precious Blood, which dyed that sacred Frame, seem'd with the Voice of Grace to cry-out to his Soul: " O Centurion, Centurion! receive me by Compunction into thy Soul; for I am the Blood of thy God."

In short, dear Auditors of mine! It is too sadly true: The Reason, why Christians live so illy, is, that they take but little Trouble to think well. JESUS is insulted with the Tongue or the Actions, because JESUS is seldom beheld on his Cross, or is beheld but with fugitive Looks. Whereas, to be beheld with any Profit, he should be consider'd daily, and consider'd not with a passing volatil Reflection, but with Sedateness Leisure and Attention. In a word, Beloved, we must survey this sacred Object not with the Multitude but with the Centurion.

This, with the Help of God, I purpose soon to do. In Front and facing JESUS on his Cross, I shall survey the mangled Body of my bleeding Lord, and dwell on every Wound: And if you can resolve to bear

Y
me

Third Indiction of the PASSION.

me company in this doleful Contemplation; I'll shew you what a havock your Crimes and mine have made of the Lord of Majesty. Who knows but from his sacred Wounds the Voice of Grace may breathe Salvation into the most harden'd Breasts in this Assembly. When the Voice of this our Brother's Blood, instead of crying, like That of *Abel*, to God for Vengeance, shall cry-out to every Christian: " O Christian
 " Soul! Neglect me not, receive me, hoard
 " me in thy Breast, let me not fall to the
 " Ground when shed for you; for I am the
 " Blood of thy God: " Who knows but the most obstinate of Sinners may melt into compunctive Moisture? In hopes of this, on next *Good-Friday* at nine o'Clock precisely in the Morning I shall begin the Passion of our Lord and quite go through with it: On next *Good-Friday* then, I hope to find you All already here, preparing; to attend your suffering Lord. If you should rise a little earlier that Day than usual; it cannot hurt you much. You cannot have much to do that Day: And if you should; it cannot be a mighty Grievance to give-up a little temporal Lucre for the Love of him who gave-up all for you. What tho' you should, O Females, for that one Morning, omit the Business of the Toilet, and forego your Beauty-Washes; the Consequence cannot be great. The shorn dis-
 figured

figured Form of the once lovely JESUS will keep you All in Countenance. And You, O Men, if you should not have Time to powder, dress, and come so very Spruce: the tatter'd Garb and the dishevel'd Locks of your Redeemer will set off to Advantage the homeliest Appearance you can make. Let Nothing then discourage or retard you: But come; and come with penitential Hearts.





S E R M O N

ON

M I D - L E N T S U N D A Y.

St. J O H N vi. 15.

JESUS, when he knew that they would come to take him and make him King, fled again into the Mountain himself alone.



ALREADY had our Divine Lord, Beloved Auditors, but just made his Escape from the ungrateful Persecutions of a People he came to befriend. Now again does he betake him to Flight to shun the grateful Sallies of a People whom he has just befriended. O insipid fallacious World! Thus it is that neither thy Frowns nor thy Favours can entice my Redeemer to pay thee any Regard: So little does he trust to thy Love or thy Hatred, that thy Insults and Courtifies

tifies are alike Objects of his Contempt. Dearest Audience of mine! What shall we say to this double Flight of Christ? Beautiful indeed is the Observation of St. *Augustin*, "that Christ being the Word of God every Action of this Divine Word must be a Word of Instruction to us." *That is*, in short, every Action of his is a sensible lively Lesson of Improvement for us. But what Instruction, think you, can we draw from the Flight of our Divine Master? If his Enemies pursued him to Destruction; he could summon the Powers of Heaven to his Assistance: If his Admirers sought him to Honour; he could direct their pious Fervor to a Conformity with his Will. Why then retreat, and retreat so precipitately from either? Oh Christians! These Fears of Christ are not for his Safety, but for the Safety of Every-One of You. Christ flees, not to avoid the Dangers he apprehends, but to teach you to avoid by Flight the Dangers you have Reason to apprehend. Every Hour of our Lives do the Powers of Hell persecute us, as the *Jews* did our Saviour, to Destruction. Every Hour do our sensual Passions press upon us, as the fond Populace of this Gospel did on him, to abandon ourselves to momentary Pleasures. To escape then the One and the Others, what Road shall we take better than that which our Divine Guide has pointed-

pointed-out to us? What surer Means than to betake ourselves, like him, to Flight? He, whose Safety was in his own Hands, fled from Danger, to teach us to do the same; mindful of what his Holy Spirit assures us, that *He who loves Danger shall perish in it*. In a word, Certain as he was of Victory, if he pleased to engage: He chose rather to flee than encounter the Occasions of unnecessary Combat; on purpose to leave us an Example and Lesson, to flee the Occasions of Danger, if we mean not to perish in it. It being an undoubted Truth, that the Best of us all are but miserable frail Creatures, by Nature prone to Sin; and so far from being, like him, sure of conquering, we are certain of being overcome by the Danger we despise. This if we credit the sacred Expositors was the Document our Divine Master mean'd to give us in retreating to the Mountain. And this it is which I purpose this Day to enforce to you. He who courts the Causes must like the Effects they produce: And whoever embraces the Occasions of sinning must certainly love the Sin itself. Such of you then as are sincerely desirous of never yielding to the Fury of Satan nor to the Flattery of your own sensual Appetites, have recourse to Flight: For be assured of This:

I. The

I. The Innocent among You will infallibly fall, in the midst of Occasions sought, or foreseen and not shun'd: *And*

II. Amidst such Occasions the Penitent among you will certainly relapse.

“ Forbid it, Lord ! O graciously forbid
 “ it! And in thy wonted Mercy keep us
 “ ever on our Guard against the Guilt of
 “ wilful Sin and every distant Tendency
 “ which leads, tho’ ever so obliquely, to-
 “ wards it. Never permit us rashly to
 “ perish in the Danger of our seeking: Nor
 “ foolishly to court Destruction, like sense-
 “ less Flies, in the very Blaze which has
 “ already scorch’d us. No: But on the
 “ Reverse, continue to hold out to us thy
 “ Guardian Grace and Lights; that, taught
 “ by the past false Steps of Others (or our
 “ own) We may be ever mindful of this
 “ important Truth, that the sole certain
 “ Means of Safety from a Precipice, is,
 “ never to approach the Brink.”

I. There are but two Roads that I know
 of in this Valley of Tears, by which we
 may arrive at the eternal Mansions of Bliss
 prepared for us. *The One is*, To live a
 Life of Innocence, so as to preserve our
 Baptismal Grace unsullied till Death: A
 Way This, which is beaten, alas, by Few,
 very Few. *The Other*, not less difficult,
 but

but happily nevertheless more frequently trodden, is That of resolutely renouncing a Life of Sin and steadily embracing a State of hearty Repentance. Now This premised, I must insist: It is morally impossible to live wilfully in the Midst of sinful Occasions, and yet to remain Innocent. Nay more (if more can be said) it is impossible for a Man who involves himself in Occasions of sinning to have a sincere Aversion to Sin, or not to lose it if he has it. 'Tis sufficient to strike Terror into the most undaunted Breast, to think seriously on the universal Sentiment of the Fathers; who unanimously agree, that the Lives of Missioners and Apostolic Men, tho' by Zeal employ'd and exerted in, nay consecrated to, the Service of Thousands of Mankind, are Lives nevertheless surrounded with every Danger, and extremely exposed to being infected by the Corruption they are forced to encounter - on every side; unless They set-out, from the Beginning, well provided with the most powerful Antidotes. And yet, Christians, terrifying as the Thought is, it has it's Foundation in Truth. The Man, who, to succour a Person struggling for Life in the mid'st of a Wreck, leaps into the Seas in the height of a Storm, has need of abundance of Vigour and Skill in braving the Waves and dividing the Waters: Otherwise he runs the greatest Risk of becoming

coming rather a Companion than an Assistant to the drowning Sufferer: He may share in his Danger, nay in his Destruction, but cannot afford him Relief. So the Soul, which is not perfectly grounded in the Maxims and Practices of eternal Life and familiarly versed in the Arts of a refined Piety, can never launch into the Midst of the World (tho' it be with the charitable Purpose of saving many Souls from the innumerable Occasions of sinning with which a secular Life is beset) without utmost Danger. Such a Soul, *I say*, cannot engage in so difficult an Attempt, without imprudently seeking the Safety of Others at the greatest Hazard of his own.

For this very Reason (if you will indulge me a short Digression) when we coolly consider, on one Hand, the ticklish tender unexperienced Age, at which the Necessity of the Times forces-over into this Mission Numbers of the Apostolic Labourers in it, and weigh, on the Other, the almost infinit Dangers, Occasions, Temptations and Snares They are here continually beset with, without any of those external Restraints of distinguishing Habits, or monastic Retreats, which in other Countries would serve as Help-mates to tottering Virtue; We shall save ourselves a great deal of Scandal. For, if all this be sedately reflected on; instead of being scandalized at the few Indiscre-

tions we may now and then perceive in Some of them, we shall rather compassionate Them; and impute their little Oversights less to their Fault than to their Misfortune Instead of being shockt at the absolute Fall of now and then One; we shall rather be astonish'd, that It happens so seldom. Nay we shall adore the merciful Providence of God, to whose special Grace alone it can be attributed, that, out of so small a Number of Missioners in this Land, so very great a Majority of them should manfully persist in their virtuous Struggles, and, not only bear-up, to the End, against the rapid Torrent of Sin and sinful Occasions capable almost of overwhelming the very Elect; but even should have Strength enough of Virtue, Grace and Zeal to snatch from the growing Danger Thousands of sinking Souls to share with themselves an endless Security: But let us return to our Argument.

It is true indeed that to compass this They are forced to live in perpetual War with Themselves; to allow their Passions, Senses and Appetites no Quarter; to act with utmost Circumspection; to impose the most rigorous Laws on their Sentiments and Inclinations; to study a thousand secret Means of Self-denial, Humiliation of Mind and Maceration of Body; and often to retire into their own Souls, there to converse with,

with, consult and sollicit God, by Prayer and Offerings of Mercy and Charity, in order to obtain fresh Supplies of Strength and Grace; that, while They are preaching to Others, they may not become Reprobates Themselves. Still do they, with all This, find it a difficult, extremely difficult, Task to make their own Election to Glory sure and undoubted.

Now let us argue thus: Men grown Old in the School of Virtue, familiariz'd to Prayer, Mortification and Alms-deeds, habituated to Self-denial and the Contempt of the World: Men so averst to Sin as to sacrifice their Lives to the subduing it; Men, in a word, who throw themselves into the Occasions of Sin, merely from such pious Motives as are capable of sanctifying them: These very Men, with all their Zeal and Charity, are perpetually in danger of losing Sight of Innocence, even in the very Act of cherishing it in Others. Nay Some actually have lost it, and come forth miserably distemper'd from the very Places into which they enter'd in quality of Physicians. Shall the Laity then nursed in Luxury, fed with Vanity, and cloath'd with Pride, plunge into all the Dissipations of the World, and riot amidst all it's Incentives to Vice for no other Motive than to riot; and yet never lose Sight of Innocence? "If We, says St. Cyprian, if We Ministers of God are

“ in danger of losing ourselves, even where
 “ the Commands of God lead us on; with
 “ what Hopes of Safety can You advance,
 “ where the Laws of the Almighty bid you
 “ retreat?” O Christians! It is well observed: If We with all our Fear and Circumspection, cannot be safe; will Presumption and fancied Security suffice to guard you from real Danger?

“ But there, *perhaps you'll say*, lies all
 “ the Mistake. The very Reason of such
 “ Men's falling is their being too timorous
 “ and circumspect. We fall not amidst
 “ Occasions of sinning, because we rush
 “ into the Midst of them without Fear.”
 That is, in short, Christians, as much as to say: You are not apprehensive of falling nor fearful of Danger, tho' in the Midst of it. Alas! There lies your greatest Danger. Less should I tremble for you, if I saw you afraid of sinful Occasions, than I do, while I see you so confident in the Midst of them. *David* gave *Saul* a convincing Proof of his deserving better from him than Persecution; when he shew'd the latter the Skirt of his Coat, to convince him, that, with equal Facility, he could have triumph'd over his Life. *Saul* was in Fact convinced of the Injustice of warring against *David*: And Peace was on both sides agreed-to, declared, and confirm'd with the tenderest Countersigns of Friendship. Still, says the
 Scripture,

Scripture, notwithstanding all their mutual Pledges of Peace, *Saul went down to his own House, and David and his Men went up into safer Places.* * But why into safer Places? After the strongest Assurances of a Reconciliation and Peace with his Enemy, it was rather time, methinks, to lay down his Arms. No, Beloved, No: *David* was an experienced Soldier, and therefore more afraid of Peace than of War. Dangers by rendering us fearful put us upon our Guard; whereas a fancied Security too often, by rendering us confident, renders us defenceless; and Nothing will sooner hurry us into certain Ruin than an ill-managed Confidence.

* 1 Kings
xxiv.

David had already had the Experience of This, in his Engagement with *Goliath*. For how, think you, did a Stripling so young as He at that time was, and so weak, succeed to overthrow a *Colossus* so corpulent and vigorous? But was it, do you imagin, *David* alone who conquer'd *Goliath*? No: *Goliath* chiefly contributed to the Defeat of himself. The Stone from the young Shepherd's Sling was what laid him on the Ground; but the first Weapon which subdued him was his own fancied Security. Disdainful and Self-confident the haughty Monster was advancing to the Combat, when approaching near his Antagonist and surveying the Candour of his Locks, the Sleekness of his Skin, with a lovely Bloom

on

* 1 Kings
xvii.

on his Cheeks, but without any Armour on his Back, he sovereignly scorn'd him. *When the Philistin look'd and saw David, says the Text ; he despised him ?* * And no more was necessary to destroy the *Philistin*. An Enemy set at Naught will always be the more formidable in the end. *David*, for example, had no need of Arms against the *Giant* : The Presumption of the *Latter* served the *Former* as a Weapon to overcome him. There was no Proportion between them for Strength : The *Philistin* was all Vigour ; all Weakness *David*. No Matter : The *Philistin's* insolent Scorn fortified the Hands of the feeble *Israelite*. In a word, his self-confident Pride overcame his own Strength as *Isaiab* says, † *His Pride and Arrogance were more than his Fortitude*. Say then once more, Christians, that you are not in Danger of being overcome by sinful Occasions, because you fear not the Danger : Say, that Apostolic Men fall by them, too often, by being over sollicitous not to fall ; just as a Man, who, crossing a rapid Torrent on a narrow Plank, if he be seized with a Panick ; shall totter, grow giddy ; and tumble-in : While Another, who lightly trips over it undaunted, shall cross it unhurt. Still I maintain, that, if amidst the Dangers, Temptations and sinful Occasions of the World, you behave like *David*, with Fear and Circumspection ; you shall go through

† *Isaiab*
xvi.

through them with Fruit and Applause: But if, like the *Philistin*, you scorn them and trust to your own imaginary Strength; with him, you will precipitate, the Dupes of your own Self-confidence:

And what room can you have for Confidence, that you shall conquer the Occasions leading to Sin: You, who are not in the Midst of them against your Will, but by absolute Choice; with Gust and studied Purpose? You, who premeditatedly frequent Conversations, Entertainments and public Sights, where are perpetually going forward Jest and Speeches (to say the best of them) full of Levity; Looks, Oglings and graceful Smiles, the more terrible to Innocence for coming from beauteous Objects? Is it very likely, that you will shut your Eyes, your Ears, your Fancy, to the dangerous Objects? Will you bear-up against the amorous Gaieties flying, in a thousand Forms, about this Room, that Assembly, or this other public Place? Ah! Too true is it, that Many of you, have not born-up. Already have Many of you yielded to the Tide of Temptations. To yourselves I appeal for the Truth of this: Say Christians, was it never true, that, having enter'd into this or that House or Company with your Souls all your own, you have come-out thence divided in yourselves, and left your Thoughts wholly behind you? Is it not
too

too true, that, in gazing on certain Faces, listening to certain Discourses and giving too much Attention to certain Sights, all your Spirits have sometimes been in a Ferment, and your Imagination uncommonly heated? And can you say, that Innocence has suffer'd Nothing by the Shock? Would to Heaven you could!

II. But, *methinks*, I hear Some one say.
 " Alas! It is true, but too true, that my
 " Innocence suffer'd: It is true, that I
 " have let myself be carried-away by a
 " Current of such sinful Occasions. Yes,
 " yes: It is true, that I fell, and fell, just
 " as you say, by trusting too much to
 " my own Weakness. And therefore is it,
 " that now, Thanks to the Divine Grace,
 " I go into the like Occasions in a very
 " different Manner: In short, I carry
 " with me such Resolutions and Safe-
 " guards as may secure me from falling
 " again." Heavens! What do I hear? You,
 O Christians, have been once overcome by
 this very Occasion: And yet you return to
 it? And return to it, because you fancy
 yourself sufficiently guarded by your former
 Fall? What! The very Thought, which
 should make you more fearful, makes you
 more presumptuous? Shall I tell you plainly
 what all this means? The Sense of it is,
 that you once fell; and are so much in
 Love

Love with the Precipice, that you want to fall down it again. The Sense of it is, that you are by no means resolved to divorce the Sin, which you once wedded to. The Sense of it is, that you pretend to repent but are not sincere.

Ah! what Breast, which is yet warm with the least spark of Zeal for the Honour of Christ or the Salvation of the Souls of his Purchase, can forbear melting with Compassion and Grief, to reflect, that all the Holy Sacraments appointed by *Jesus* for the strengthening those Souls and raising them above human Frailty, have nevertheless so very little Efficacy; that, tho' they are often (God alone indeed knows with what Dispositions) received by us, yet do they leave our Souls more than ever fickle, more than ever impotent in good, more than ever inveterate in Evil. But ah! How much more deserving of our Tears, is it not, to reflect, that sinful Occasions not avoided, are the Obstacles, which, obstructing the Efficacy of the Holy Sacraments, frustrate the gracious Designs of the Saviour of the World; who at the immense Cost of Labour and Sweat and Tears and Blood has endeavour'd to purify Human Nature in vain.. For as the Prophet *Ezechiel* foretold, *there has been great sweating with much Labour and the exceeding Rust thereof is not gone out.* * Sin and
 VOL. II. A a sinful ^{* Ezech. xxiv.} Chald.

sinful Occasions are as much embraced may sought after as ever. You preach, you exhort, you spend your Spirits, in the Confessionals at the Altar, in the Pulpit, O Ministers of God, all to better the World and still does the World grow more and more wicked. And to what can we impute this down-hill Improvement but to the stupid vicious Confidence they are possessed with, that they may forsooth quit Sin without quitting the Occasions of it? In short as the Prophet observes, the World is *full of Occasions*: * And Mankind is full of eagerness for them.

* *Ibid.*

Ah Dearest Fellow Christians! After having been many times tost and re-tost, at the peril of your Souls, by the tempestuous Tide of your Passions, Sins and sinful Occasions, you are now, I hope, most of you, happily landed in Safety, by means of the Holy Sacrament of Penance and the solemn Piety of the Season. Oh! Cast then no more wishful Looks back to those Occasions by which you had liked already to perish. Your Soul, O penitent Youth, had like to have suffer'd an eternal Wreck in that dangerous Amour, or Friendship, or what you please to call it. Ah! If you do not already repent of the Repentance which rescued you from it; look no more that way. You, O young Woman, whom the Plank of a Holy Conversion has

has saved from being over-whelm'd by a Deluge of Vanities, give-over that Levity of Dress, that Giddiness of Carriage, those languishing Looks, those alluring Speeches and studied Graces. You, O Ambitious, turn your backs for ever on those Arts and Artifices, on which, as on so many Rocks, your Innocence or Repentance has so often suffer'd Damage. You, O Drinkers, let that Tavern, that public House, that Company, that Liquor be for ever interdicted to you; in which your Conscience and Senses have so often been wreckt. In short, Sinners of every kind, or rather let me say, Christians of all Degrees! if you are Innocent and wish to continue so, keep wide of the Rocks where so many Thousands have split: Avoid the Occasions which have robb'd so many Thousands before you of their Innocence. And You who have experienced the ill Effects of these Occasions enough to think yourselves safe only in quitting those Effects; renounce for ever to the Causes, the Occasions, too; or you are not sincere.

Think not, that your having often been in the midst of Occasions of Sin and overcome them, or been insensible to them, is any Proof of your being invulnerable, or out of reach of Danger. On the contrary, your Danger is the greater, the more often you have overcome; as every Victory

* Judges
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lessens your Fears and consequently your Vigilance. *Sampson* had so often conquer'd the *Philistins*, that he fancied he had Nothing more to do than just to rise-up, look at them, and put them to Flight, as he had often done before. *I will go-forth* says he, *as I did before and will shake myself.* * In fact he did go-forth: But how? As he had done before, a Combatant and a Conqueror? No, no: He went-forth blinded, loaded with Chains, and treated with Ignominy and Scorn. Ah! How many *Sampsons* are there not, in a spiritual Sense, among Christians? How Many, who, grown presumptuous and Selfful, after having been frequently in such or such a private Party (with Innocence, as they imagin, because they have not consummated a Sin) how many of These, *I say*, confront the Danger so often till they perish in it? Be upon your guard then, Christians, and be mindful, that you are not stronger than *Sampson*. Trust not to former Strength nor to present Experience. No Age, tho' ever so grey in the Exercise of Piety, is safe against the Occasions of Impiety. The Holy Scriptures are full of Instances of Old Men, who have been Leud, unjust, ambitious, cruel and addicted to the Extremes of every Vice. Nay You yourselves have with you the Conviction of this Truth, that we ought never to trust ourselves

ourselves to the least Occasion of Sin. When your inward Incentives to Sin are ever so much weaken'd by Sickness, Grief or Poverty; is it not plain, that the native Heat of them in you is rather dissembled than stifled; since it shall immediately blaze-up on the very first Change, and blaze with double Fierceness?

So then, Dearest Auditors, amidst Occasions of Sin it is more than probable, that the Innocent among you will fall, the Penitent will relapse? Yes: Resolution reels in the Midst of Opportunities. No Purpose, No Courage, No Experience nor Age is sufficient to stand. What then have you to do? What! Why—Are you Innocent? Follow the chaste *Joseph*; and flee at the first Attack: Leaving behind you, in the hands of Danger, your Cloke, your Substance, your All, when necessary, for the Salvation of your Souls. And remember, that Christ, the Patern of all Innocence, nay unstainable Innocence itself, while he was judging the Adulteress, not to look at her, stoop'd to write with his Finger on the Floor. Or are you rather to be rank'd among penitent Sinners? Follow then the Example of that illustrious One, *St. Peter*, and go-forth from the dangerous Porch where you unhappily fell. Visit no more that Person, that Place: Look no more towards that Precipice, where you stumbled before: And remember, that
the

the bare Slippers of *Judith* were more than sufficient to overthrow an *Holofernes*. In a word, Innocents ! If you will remain so ; flee the Occasions of falling. Penitents ! If you will not relapse ; flee the Occasions by which you have fallen. These are the only two Roads leading to Heaven : If you go besides These ; You shall never get thither. But on the reverse : If your Directors teach you otherwise, or omit to teach you This ; they grossly flatter you ; if you go to Confession without the Dispositions to do This, and acquaint not your Directors ; you grossly deceive Them, but much more yourselves : Your Confessions are sacrilegious and your Road ends in Perdition.

But why do I lose my Time thus in labouring to prove, on one side, what is clear as the Meridian Sun ; and, on the other, to inculcate Duties of which not One will be practiced ? What ! Is it possible ? Will Nothing be done after all I have said ? No ; Nothing. What will no Stop be put to Excess ? No Reformation made in Vanity of Dress ? Not at all. Will no Bounds be set to the unconscionable Liberties in Trade ? No : None in the least. Will no Limits be set to the Familiarities between Persons of a different Sex ? None to immodest Looks ? None to unseemly Actions, to indecent Expressions ? None, absolutely None. What then ! shall lascivious Pictures be still seen
hanging

hanging on Christian Walls? Yes, yes, they shall. Still shall corrupt Songs be sung, and vicious Authors read, by Christian Tongues: Still shall loose Company have Christian Visitants: And every Place of Sin be haunted and upheld by Christians nay by Catholics? O Ministers of *Jesus Christ*! Whence so much Love and Tenderness for your Flock? To what End destroy your Health, and shorten by hasty Degrees your Lives; if all your Labours shall be lost, and Catholics will absolutely damn themselves in spite of your Endeavours to oppose them? But ah Dearest Fellow Christians of mine! How comes it, that you so hate and despise those precious Souls which we so love and prize? And if you loved them; how could it be possible for you to go so coolly to Work to damn them? And what can be more so, than giving-up yourselves without Fear or Remorse, to every sinful Occasion which offers?

I begun this Sermon with the Flight of Christ, when grown-up. Let me then draw towards a Conclusion of it with reflecting on his Retreat, when an Infant. An Angel appears to his putative Father and tells him, *Arise and take the Child, and his Mother, and flee into Egypt: For it shall come to pass, that Herod will seek the Child to destroy him.* * Startled at these Words, the holy Patriarch arises; and (says the sacred Text) *took the Child and his Mother by Night* and

*St. Matth

ii.

* *Ibid.*

and fled into Egypt. * “ But why, you’ll
 “ say, all this Precipitance? Why all this
 “ Cowardice? Why not wait till *Herod* set
 “ forth on his bloody Design? Or why not
 “ at least wait for the Return of Day? The
 “ nearer the Danger, the greater the Heart
 “ will appear in acting coolly. ” No, Chri-
 stians No: That’s a Mistake. Christ, in
 fact, here flees before the Time; to teach
 you, not to wait till it be high Time to
 flee. He flees, not barely from Danger,
 but even from the Danger of wanting to
 flee. To turn the back on Danger when
 present is often a mark of Meanness; but
 to flee the Danger of being in Danger is
 ever a Proof of Courage and Wisdom.
 “ For it is abundantly safer, *says St. Jerom,*
 “ to be in an impossibility of perishing
 “ than just to have escaped from being
 “ likely to perish.” Go then Christians
 and carry but home with you from Sermon
 this one grand Maxim, and I shall not think
 I have preach’d to you this Day in vain.
 Otherwise if you carry neither This nor
 any of the Many I have this Day suggested
 to you; I shall once more be plain with
 you and tell you, that your Perdition is ine-
 vitable, because your Obstinacy is wilful.
 O God then! mercifully give these Chri-
 stians the Joy of thy Salvation and con-
 firm them with a Sovereign Spirit, which,
 controuling their Passions, may keep Sin
 for-

for-ever from them, by keeping Them ever
averse, ever, wide from the Occasions of it.
Hear me I beseech thee, by thy unwearied
Mercy, *In the Name, &c.*

Fourth INDICATION of the PASSION.

THE Annals of Antiquity, who would
believe it, inform us of a Father so wretched,
that his only Son, conceiving an unnatural
Aversion to him, was continually laying
some Snare or other for his Life. Tired
at length the unhappy Parent of a Life,
which, thus haunted by domestic Treachery,
was no more Life but a lingering Death, He
takes-up, one Day, in a sudden Transport of
Anguish, a sharp-pointed Dagger and con-
ceals it under his Garment in his Bosom :
Then beckoning to his unnatural Son to
follow Him, He leads him to the thickest
Part of a lonely Forrest; where the Horror
of the Shade may second the Horror of his
Accents. Here he no sooner arrives than
he hastily draws from his Bosom the con-
ceal'd Weapon. Judge You, what Terrors
the guilty Youth must be seiz'd with at
the Brandishment of the fatal Instrument.
But in the very Instant, when he is ex-
pecting to be pierced to the Heart with
it, he sees it presented to him by his
Father, with these melting Words: "Take
" This, my Son; and kindly put an End
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" to the wretched Life of a miserable
 " Father, who is desirous of convincing
 " Thee, that he loves thee even beyond
 " Life, tho' hated to Death by Thee. If
 " Avarice has extinct in Thee all the Senti-
 " ments of a Child ; know, my Dearest,
 " that Love will not suffer me to forget the
 " Tenderness of a Parent. And therefore
 " is my Death become desirable to me,
 " because Thou ar't become anxious for
 " it. But then I will have that Death
 " without Danger to Thee ; that It may
 " not be embitter'd by the Prospect of
 " thy Disgrace and Punishment. Dearest,
 " tho' Cruel ! Why do'st thou hesitate ?
 " Strike, my Son, strike : There is No-
 " One bye, to accuse Thee. Hark ! How
 " still this Desert is ! Behold the Dagger
 " in thy own Hand ! Behold this naked
 " Breast ready to receive the welcome
 " Blow ! Strike, my dearest Son, strike
 " home. Kindly dispatch this hated Fa-
 " ther ; and spend thy Rage." *I strike ?*
I dispatch thee ? I vent my rage. Ah Fa-
ther ! But suddenly seized with such
 a Grief, such a Shame, such a Remorse,
 such a Love, as Nature alone can kindle ;
 but not even Nature can express, He fell
 into a Swoon : From which, extinct the
 former Parricide (with all his Rage) a new
 respectful Son arose all Duty, Tenderness
 and Love.

O obstinate Sinners! How many and what Snares have you not laid for the Life of JESUS, your all-gracious Parent! So well level'd have your Mischiefs been, that they have pierced him often to the Soul. And so perfidious has your treacherous Ingratitude been, that not the Quantity of Blood you have drawn has yet sufficed to satiate it. Courage then, hardy Sinners, Courage! As if he had not done enough; as if it was but a Trifle to have given you Health, Beauty, Affluance, and Knowledge, the Instruments with which you have hitherto wounded him; He offers you still his bleeding Body on the Cross: And, in this sacred time of Penance and Forgiveness He puts in your Hands his Grace; that you may wound him over-again with the Abuse of it, or spare him, just as your Hearts shall give you. Why take you not his Nails, his Spear, his Grace; and cruelly level them all against him? Courage, *I say*, be boldly Wicked and strike at him again: Each Blow shall open a Plurality of Wounds in JESU's Heart. But Ah! You are Christians, after all, tho' Sinners: At least you are human. And therefore once I have shewn you, what your tender Parent JESUS has already suffer'd for and from you, how chearfully he gave himself up to your Violence, and how severely You and I have treated him; I am in hopes, We shall

not only mourn and abhor our past Ingratitude, with the once cruel yet afterwards relenting Son, but even study to love this gracious Father full as much at least as before we persecuted him.

Meet me then next *Good-Friday*: Or rather, let us meet our injured heavenly Parent; that We may All unite in making him an honourable Amends for all the Injuries we hitherto have jointly done him, and bury our former Guilt in recent Grief for him. Let Nothing then on that Day interfere to call you from this solemn Engagement. And what can interfere? You will have no Banquets then to take-up your Time, 'tis to be hoped. And your Entertainments cannot want much Time for preparing them; unless your Grief be of the hungry Kind. The Time then you spare from Food you may afford to pious Sorrow; And O Heaven grant you such a fruitful Sadness as may entitle you to persevering Grace and never-ending Joy!



SERMON



S E R M O N

ON

P A S S I O N S U N D A Y.

St. JOHN viii. 43, 48, 59.

JESUS saith to the JEWS: *He, who is of GOD, heareth the Words of GOD: Therefore you hear not because you are not of GOD. The Jews therefore answer'd and said to him, Do not We say well that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a Devil.... They took Stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself and went out of the Temple.*



INEFFABLE must that Delicacy of Divine Love be, Revered Christians, which could induce the Almighty to extend his Affections for us, as he has done and still does, to a double Eternity,
in

in some Sense: Loving us from all Eternity without any Beginning and desiring to continue to us that Love throughout an Eternity without any End. How unhappy then ought not We to think our Love for God in that It must be confined to a simple Eternity immeasurable on one side only? That we are privileged with the Power of loving God henceforth without End, is an unpurchaseable Happiness. Still, that We cannot pay him Affection for Affection, by loving him with a Love without any Beginning, is an Impotence so much the more piteous as our created Nature renders it irremediable. But then is it not the most stupid Ingratitude our Hearts can give into, that, instead of enlarging that simple Eternity of Duration to-come which our Beings are capable of, and dilating the Instants of it, by beginning as early as possible to love God, we are, on the contrary, forever slothful, forever backward, in putting a Commencement to the Love of him? Equity and Good-Sense seem to require absolutely, that, since We ought to render that Eternity of Divine Love, which is consistent with our Nature, equivalent in some manner or other to the two-fold Eternity of God's Affection for Us, we should at least begin the Duration of our Zeal for him from the very first Instant of our being in Possession of human Reason,

Reason. Nevertheless so inequitable is our Correspondence to the Divine Bounty, that We seldom give Commencement to our Love for our Divine Benefactor, till our Reason is almost on the Point of expiring. *O Foolish and slow of Heart!* O Christians! Do I injure you in calling you Such? My last Discourse, I dare say, convinced you of the Importance of giving yourselves to God in good earnest in the holy Sacrament of Penance. And your own Consciences, I dare hope, have plainly told you the Necessity of doing it. But are you therefore the nearer to God? Ah! Would, I could, with any certain Hopes say you are! You resolve to do it, I know: But when? "O! There is Time enough. "To-morrow, next Week, next *Easter*; "or when this troublesome Affair is "over, when that Point is carried, when "this other sinful Pursuit is at an End: "In short, when I am at Leisure, when "I can do it commodiously; in plain "*English*, when I have Nothing else to do." Thus is the great Affair of Salvation, the important Point of establishing a solid Peace with God, put-off from Childhood to Youth, from Youth to Manhood, from Manhood to Old-Age, from Age to Decrepacy, from Decrepacy to Dotage, and too often to Death and beyond it. How, like the *Jews*, do Christians of every Age
trifle

trifle with the Maxims of Eternity! If a Preacher, a Director, a spiritual Friend, exhorts them to the Reformation of their Lives, to the Correction of their Vices, to the Confession of their Sins; in a word, to a little less Licence and a little more Modesty, to a little less Fraud and a little more Honesty, to a little less Luxury and a little more Sobriety in Food and Rayment, to a little less Impiety and something more of Religion; "Is the Devil in you, *they* " *cry?* Must We live like Hermits? Must " we have Senses and not use them? Must " we grow Old before We are well " Young? Why are our Appetites given " us, but to indulge them? Why were " Pleasures created, but for us to enjoy " them? There is Time enough to grow " old: And Time enough, when we are " old, to repent of the Sins of our Youth. " Do We not say well then, O Spirituallists, " that you are possesst with the Devil?" Ah! How like is not this Reasoning to That of the *Jews* to our Saviour JESUS CHRIST? *Do not We say well, that Thou ar't a Samaritan and hast a Devil?* And ah! How justly may not we say to such Christians as Christ did to Them: " *If* " *we speak Truth to You; why do you not* " *believe us, and act as if you believed* " *us? If it is true that you have sinn'd and* " *therefore ought to repent; if Vices must* be

“ be renounced; if Virtues must be re-
 “ solved on; if Sins must be bewail’d,
 “ confest, atoned-for, and fled from in
 “ their very remotest Occasions: If a State
 “ of Penance, in a word, must be enter’d
 “ into by All, who have sinn’d and wish
 “ nevertheless to be saved; why must not
 “ all this be done immediately, in Youth,
 “ in Health, in Prosperity, in the present
 “ Instant, while there is a power of doing
 “ it. *If We speak Truth, why not believe*
 “ *us? Ah! Must it not be for the same*
 “ Reason which the Divine JESUS gives:
 “ *He who is of GOD, beareth the Word*
 “ *of GOD: Therefore you hear not, because*
 “ *you are not of GOD?*” What wonder
 then, Beloved, can it be, that JESUS should
 deal with such Christians as he did with
 the perverse Synagogue of his Time. If
 he instructs their Minds by his Ministers;
 calls their Hearts to Repentance by his
 Word, speaks to their Souls by his Grace,
 and yet they hear not or will not hear:
 If, instead of renouncing the Deaf and
 Dumb-Devil, they will renounce or at
 least resist GOD and think it Time enough
 to return to him when they have no more
 Time to compliment the World, the Flesh,
 and the Devil with; what wonder can it
 be, that Christ thus slighted, thus ill-used,
 should abscond by giving them no more
 Graces? And if they persist in being expe-

ditionous in every earthly Pursuit, and dilatory only in seeking and serving God; what better can they justly expect than that (once their Stock of Graces which they manage so illy is lessen'd, is wasted, is totally exhausted, and destroy'd by mortal Sin) JESUS should absolutely with-draw himself from that living Temple of their Hearts, which They have so basely perverted into a Den of Thieves? Thus did he serve the Rebel *Jews*, for perversely rejecting his gracious Invitations to speedy Repentance, and for returning his gracious Efforts to mollify their stony Hearts with ungrateful Attempts to overwhelm him with Stones. JESUS *bid himself, And went out of their Temple.* And thus may he, in all Probability, deal with you; if, Deaf to his Voice or indifferent to his Grace, you overwhelm all his Mercies with the Obduracy of Delays. Surely, Christians, if there be any Mistakes in your Conduct, which want Tears of Blood to bewail them; This foolish Dilatoriness of yours is one. And what Error can be more deplorable than This, that Christians shall consume the Flower of their Days in the most useless, impertinent, pernicious Trifles; nay waste the Whole of Life in ineffectual Purposes of giving themselves up, one Time or Other, to God; but still with the Design of never giving him but the wither'd Remnants

Remnants of Old-Age and Imbecillity? This, This is the fatal Error I mean to combat at present: This is the Disorder which struck my Reflection on reading the Gospel for the Day. It was a Folly without Example, in the *Jews*, to imagin, that *Jesus* would bear to the End their obdurate Resistance against his Divine Lights. And it is no less a Madness in Christians to imagin, that he will be forever put, off with the Evasions, or even fair Promises of Christians, who dally with his Grace and their own Salvation. How many Years ago is it not since God erected your Hearts, by Baptism, into his living Temples of his Divine Grace? And O! how little Honour has he yet received from them? Is he then always to be thus put-off. Some of you have kept profaning those Sanctuaries for twenty, Some for thirty, Some for forty, fifty and more Years: Ever sinning and ever promising Repentance. Is it not then high Time to fulfill these Promises? To repair the prodigious Ruin in your Souls, will the Latter Days of your Life, think you, be sufficient? Weak, disordered, languid, impotent as you are at best; do you imagin, that you will be able to contend with vicious Habits, vicious Inclinations, and innumerable Spiritual Enemies, at a Time of Life when you will have more than enough to do to struggle with the Difficulties and Hardships of Old-Age?

If you can scarce depend on the present Minutes of Youth and Health and Vigour; can you better trust to the uncertain Morrow or to the Time of Dotage, Sicknefs and Imbecility? Ah? It is a deceitful Notion: And the Fallacy of that Mistake shall make the Matter of this Sermon. Attend then, while I briefly shew you, that

I. Every Delay of giving ourselves sincerely to GOD is a sovereign Ingratitude: In-as-much as It is a rude Slight (not to call it a gross Abuse) of the Divine Grace: *And*

II. It is a stupid Excess of Rashness: In as much as it is presumptuously hazard- ing a total Abandon of Divine Grace and consequently of Salvation.

“ Ah Dear JESUS! Thou who came’st to
 “ seek us, forsake us not, in Punishment of
 “ our past Delay of seeking Thee. Full-
 “ dilatory, we confess, we have been as
 “ yet in corresponding to thy gracious
 “ Calls. But ah! Henceforth we will re-
 “ pair the Time we have idly spent in
 “ seeking every Thing but Thee. With
 “ Joy We hear thy well-known Voice
 “ inviting us to a speedy cordial Re-
 “ pentance. We come, sweet Lord, we
 “ come. Behold us from this Minute All
 “ thy own. To prove that We are thine,
 “ We hear thy Words, we know thy Will,
 “ and

“ and by thy Grace resolve to obey. And
“ what, alas, can We without Thy Grace?
“ O! Pardon then our former Tardiness;
“ and let our present Diligence call back
“ thy fleeing Mercy. Hide not thy lovely
“ Face from us: Much less depart in Anger
“ from these Hearts which Thou did'st
“ form for living Temples of thy Glory.
“ But sullied, as, till now, they have been,
“ help us to fit them for thy Residence:
“ And teach us, as Thou alone can'st do,
“ to redeem the Time we have lost, by
“ future Assiduity; that thus beginning
“ fervently, tho' late, we may persist hence-
“ forward in endeavouring to fulfill many
“ Ages in a short Space; and may discreetly
“ so improve each Minute, yet to-come,
“ of Life, as with the virtuous Product of
“ the Time still left us, to purchase and
“ enlarge an Eternity of Love for Thee.”

I. Which of You all, Beloved Christians,
can help being incensed with a Degree of
Rage against the Brethren of the Patriarch
Joseph, when you come to that Part of his
Story, where you find them consulting the
Means of putting him to Death, at the very
time when they see him coming to them
loaded with Provisions for the Support of
their Life? Ungrateful Creatures! To agree
upon shedding the inoffensive Blood of a Bro-
ther, whose tender Limbs were exhausting
their

their Strength and Juices in painful Steps and toilsome Sweats, through Quaggs and Wilds and rough and rugged Ways to bring them Nourishment? O Ingratitude! O Cruelty unmatch'd by Savages! But ah, my Dearest Auditors! Even We are guilty of the same Excess: And it is our common Interest either to defend them in their Guilt or to put an End to our own Ingratitude. True it is, that, at one Time the Jealousy of these Brethren (not less allied in Iniquity than in Blood) arm'd as it was by Inhumanity, did machinate the Death of the inoffensive Youth: But then there came a Time afterwards, when they adored on their Knees Him whom they before sought to butcher with their Hands. There came a Time, when, instead of envying his Life, they offer'd their own to his Disposal, and thought it an Honour to offer themselves to him for Slaves. Why then shall we brand them with the Title of ungrateful? Why load them with Invectives? If they did treat him a little rudely, one while; did they not, in the End, make him ample Amends? And is not This, think you, a tolerable Defence of their Cause? What! A Defence? Rather is it an Aggravation of their Crime. Yes, yes: They carried (No-One denies it) they carried to the Throne of *Joseph* in *Egypt* an Abundance of Homages, all enhanced by the Plenty of rich Presents which accompanied

accompanied Them. What then? They were dragg'd to all This, but by the Violence of down-right Famine: Nor would they ever have set Eyes again on that injured Face; if the Elements had but proved more propitious to them. Whoever recants in such a Manner, almost repeats the first Insult: It is seeking to serve One's Self and not Another, when Servitude is courted out of mere Necessity: And I will venture to say, that He does not give-over offending, who humbles himself only when compell'd. The very Brethren of *Joseph* seem'd, at last, sensible of as much. They were sensible of the Injustice of their tardy Return. Hence, what Terrors were they not seized with at the Discovery their injured Brother made of himself to them! The Prince had fine soothing them with the most tender Language, embracing them, hugging them to his Breast, generously bathing them with his majestic Tears and giving them every Assurance of his Pardon: All was in vain. Still was their Confusion obstinate at the Sight of such injured Generosity: *His Brethren could not answer him, being surpris'd with excessive Terror.** * *Genesis*
 Now let the Ingratitude of These to their ^{xlv.} Brother *Joseph* be compared, for a Minute, with our ungrateful Conduct to our God. Whatever Nourriture we have for the support of Life, all comes from him: And shall

shall we then yet have the Heart to offend him, for a long Space of Time, with a long Series of Crimes and Guilt and Treacheries, on the ill-judged Presumption of adoring him at last; when, tired of a niggard World which has Nothing more to give us, we shall be forcibly dragg'd to his Throne to seek Mercy and Help, by the Imbecillity of our Faculties, by the Decrepacy of our Years, and by the Decline of our Life? And can such Baseness find a Place in a Soul of any Faith, of any Common-Sense; *I had almost said*, of any Humanity? O Men! O You, who have yet left any Sympathy for common Equity, for common Honesty! O You, *I say*, who pique yourselves in point of Honour upon acting fairly by every Man! Why not deal fairly with your God? He was not so dilatory in giving himself to You: Witness that *Calvary*, which shew'd him bleeding, agonizing, dying, for You in the very Prime of his Life. He, for your Sakes, at the early blooming vigorous Age of Three and Thirty, gave himself up to suffer Tortures Infamy and Death on an ignoble Gibet: And will You, O Christians, never think it Time to begin to live for him? O Ingratitude! O perfidious Injustice! O self-betraying Folly.

You cannot, Beloved, be thus ungrateful to God, without being unnatural to yourselves.

O

O how surfeiting is it not to sound Sense to hear certain Expressions, which are now become the modish Cant of the Age, among Christians. " Why terrify ourselves (*they cry*) with cloudy Notions of the Divine Severity? Why stand in Awe of God as of a Tyrant, who is ever a tender Father and a courteous Friend? One Instant is sufficient with him to save us. Innumerable and ineffable are the Graces he affords in the last Hour of Life to snatch a dying Soul from the Jaws of *Satan*: And if we make but a right Use of Them, the eternal Gates of Glory will not be barr'd against us." But where is the Probability, that You, who abuse the Graces given you in the Vigour of your Senses, will make any better Use of Graces offer'd you at a Time when all your Faculties are render impotent by the Agonies which engross all your Attention? Nevertheless, Christians, observe: I go so far as to grant, what God alone knows whether or not he will grant you: I will grant you, *I say*, that You will improve those last Graces of Life; and, with the Penitent Thief, steal unexpectedly into Paradise. But still so many precious Years past, all capable of being fill'd with Merit, all capable of enlarging your Eternity of Glory? Will not They be All eternally lost in an absolute Void of Merit or Reward? O how fierce

will your Anguish be, when on the last
 Verge of Life you look-back and see the
 dreadful Havock your Delays have caused!
 When on a Death-bed looking-back on
 your past Life, and, e'er you enter that
 new World, you know so little of, you
 cast a reflecting Eye upon the Hardships
 you have struggled with in the rude World
 you are leaving: In those last Moments,
 which Peace alone can render tolerable,
 what Peace can you enjoy beholding the
 dreadful Waste of Time you leave behind
 You. Nay when you even recall your
 Thoughts to look before you, and view
 the melancholy Waste you have made of
 the Eternity you are entering into; what
 can afford You Peace? Who will be able to
 console you? What Arguments of Friends,
 or Priest or Confessor can pacify you from
 crying-out with inconceivable Regret: " O
 " fatal mad Neglect! How poor, how naked,
 " do I leave this Life to meet Eternity!
 " O hapless me: That of a Life so long
 " I have no more to carry with me to
 " the Throne of my Judge than the lan-
 " guid Remains of a few last Hours! O
 " foolish me: To have taken most Delight
 " in those Days which I wasted the most!
 " O! What have I not lost in losing Them?
 " O! What an infinit Measure of blissful
 " Rewards have I not lost for all Eternity,
 " by lavishing the Fruits which those past
 " Years

“ Years I have idly spent would have pro-
 “ duced, if managed wisely? O that I had
 “ begun this Repentance, made this General
 “ Confession, given myself up thus sincerely
 “ to God some Years ago! O that I had
 “ listen’d to my early Checks of Con-
 “ science; to the Advice, the Sermons, the
 “ Sollicitations of God’s Ministers; when
 “ in my Bloom of Life, when vigorous
 “ and Young! With what a rich Treasure
 “ of additional Felicity and Glory, should
 “ not I have amplified my Eternity, more
 “ than I now can hope to do?” O my
 Dear Faithful Christians! Be wise then:
 And spare yourselves in Time this cruel
 needless Anguish at your Close of Life, by
 doing now, by resolving from this Instant
 to do directly, what you will then wish
 to have done. If the giving yourselves up
 to God so late be a sovereign Ingratitude,
 be an extravagant injustice to God and to
 yourselves, as by what I have said it appears
 to be; why will you put him off any
 longer? Why delay your Return to him
 any farther, Ah! Be this then the Day in
 which you open your Eyes to his Lights
 your Ears to his Truths, your Hearts to his
 Love, never more to close them but to Sin!
 Ah be this the Day in which Every-One
 of you shall in earnest enter into yourselves,
 and resolve to give less Time for the Future
 to the Vanities, to the Interests, to the

Lusts of the World and the Flesh, less to Mammon and more to God! Be this, in a word, the Day on which you first seriously set about a judicious Examen of your Consciences, in order to compleat your perfect Conversion to God; Your perfect Preparation for Glory, for Heaven, for Eternity!

You, I dare answer for it, Christians, are All of you in general too mannerly, too well-bred, to bear the Thoughts of giving a first Affront to any Man. You would not for any Consideration be willingly rude to any of your Acquaintance. Tell me then, O You who stand upon Punctilios of Civility, what Rule of Good-Breeding excludes God from the Privilege of not being insulted? Why is the Author of all Decency to be the only One you dare to slight and treat rudely? If the Laws of Good-Manners give Precedence to the highest greatest most ancient Nobility; by what Laws consistent with the Politeness you take such Pride in, are you authorized to refuse God that Preference to all other Beings which he has a Right to, in your Hearts and Affections? For who so high as the most High? Who so great as the God of all Power? Who of so ancient and Illustrious a Name as the *Ancient of Days*, the Source of all Glory? What greater Affront then can you offer to God, than to slight, nay abuse, as
you

you do, the Lights, the Graces, and gracious Invitations with which he courts you to his Glory? What grosser Insult than to give Audience to every ignoble Passion preferably to the sacred Inspirations he sends you? What viler Treatment, in a word, could the most unpolish'd Savages shew to You, or you receive from Them, than the Lord of Majesty receives from you? Ah! What more impious Rudeness can there be than to give to the World, to the Flesh, to Vanities, to Impertinences to Sin, to *Satan*, the Flower of your Days, the Bloom of your Affections, the Prime of Health, the choicest Fruits of Time the Substance of Life; and to put-off the Almighty Donor of all good Gifts with the Dregs of your Existence, the Blight of your Faculties, the wither'd Remains of your Hearts, the rotted Rests of impotent Old-Age or Infirmary and the polluted Shadow of a Life lavish'd in dissolute Occupations or fruitless Indolence? Ah! Can Spirits so noble, so polite, so genteel, so well-bred, consent to treat the Lord of Majesty with such indignant Rusticity? Look-ye, Dearest Objects of my Concern! I will suppose your Lives insured to an unusual Old-Age: You are to live a long Life; and that Life, to the very last, shall be accompanied with Vigour, with Presence of Mind, with Resolution of Heart, with Activity of Limbs: I conclude therefore, with You, that you may
at

at your own Ease in that last Stage, step into the Road of a Final Repentance, and with abundance of Safety walk leisurely to Heaven, move leisurely towards God. What! Towards God, *did I say?* Alas! With what Face will you throw yourselves at the Feet of that lovely Lord, with Nothing better to present to him than the rotten Relics of your exhausted Talents: Rests which the Impotence of Nature has preserved, in spite of the Strength of your vicious Desires? With what Countenance will you offer yourselves to the Lord of Majesty at a Time when you shall be become the Refuse of the World and it's Enjoyments; the despicable Outcast of Vanity, Luxury and Presumption? If you should have Grace enough to turn to God, when the World turns it's Back upon you; how will you not redden with Excess of Shame, at the presenting yourselves before his Divine Presence, all sullied-over with thousands of vicious Habits! How will you not glow with Confusion, to appear before him, all ragged with the Want of Virtues! What! To Such a Lord, as our God is, who ever delighted in first Fruits: To that Lord, who abhor'd every Victim which was not a Firstling; who would accept of no Holocaust from the Priest, if not a First-born: To that Lord, who detested every Sacrifice where the Victim was tainted with

with Infirmary, Blemish, or Imperfection, will you presume to think of devoting hereafter an Old-age, polluted, wasted, maim'd and tottering? What if a Gardener of your own should deal thus with Any of You? If of all the rich Fruits of a plentiful Garden you trust to his cultivating he should present to you Nothing better than the stale Remains of a few rotten Apples, a few sour Grapes, or a few blighted Nectarines, reserving to himself the choicest Products of the Seasons; with what Indignation would not you look upon him? And shall the eternal Father, who is sole and sovereign Proprietor of all We possess, be treated by Us with a so much greater Rudeness and Irreverence, without the least Fear of his Resentment? Is not the horrid Example of *Cain* sufficient to dissuade us from thus rudely slighting and abusing the Goodness of our God? Why were his Offerings rejected with Indignation by the Almighty, while those of his Brother were so acceptable? Ah! It was on the same Account, as You-yourself may reasonably expect, Christians, if you persist in your Frowardness to be rejected also. He deferred his Sacrifice for many Days, and then made it of the Dregs of his Harvest. " His Fault was, *says St. Ambrose*, that he " delay'd for many Days. For it is the " Readiness and Good-will it is offer'd " with

“ with which renders every Sacrifice acceptable. ”

But You have the Instances before you of a Prodigal Son who was long contumacious and yet was kindly embraced when he did return to his Father, tho' he return'd but late; of a *Magdalen*, who, long a Slave to Vanity, was at last tenderly received, when She gave herself up to her Divine Lord. And therefore you blush not, perhaps, Christians, to offend him now, to slight and abuse his Graces at present, whose future Pardon you expect. Well: Be it granted even, that, You, who imitate their Tardiness, will share in their Return and Reception. Yet ah! You must share too at least in the Confusion They were under at their Return. Alas! What Blushes did not dye the Countenance of Penitent *Mary*, when bathing the Feet of her Divine Master with her Tears! Alas what Confusion did not cover the repenting Son, at the Sight of that Father, whose Obedience he had so long withdrawn himself from! Inso-much as now to consider himself no more in the Light of a Son, but rather scarce worthy of the Privilege of a hired Servant. Ah! how then, Dearest Christians, can you have the Courage to hazard a like Confusion by deferring your Repentance to the Last? It is possible for You, I own, to please God by returning to him in your last Stage of

of Life: But it is impossible, that you should in such Case be pleasing to yourselves. Imagine, for a Minute, that you are arrived to that crazy Period and that you have but just begun and finish'd the Offering of yourselves to GOD: Think too you see your amorous GOD fix his Eyes upon you with an Attention mix't with Pity and Disdain; shewing to you the bleeding Wounds your Stubbornness so long kept open; and, with tacit yet lively Reproaches, asking You: " Well then, dilatory Creature! Is your
 " savage Fierceness glutted at last with
 " the Havock made of this innocent
 " friendly Flesh? Are you at last resolved
 " to give-up to me the little Blast of Life
 " yet left you? Ah! This is not the Time
 " you should have chosen to return to me
 " in. Better had it been to have done so
 " ere you had so grossly corrupted your
 " Faculties. For ah how feeble, how little
 " worth Acceptance, are they now! *Thou*
 " *has't committed Fornication with many*
 " *Lovers.* * How many Lovers, O un- * *Jerem.*
 " grateful uncivil Soul, has't not thou pro- ⁱⁱⁱ
 " stituted thy Heart to, ere Thou bringest
 " it to me: And now dos't Thou offer to
 " be wholly mine? Why, but because
 " Thou can't give thyself to None, to
 " Nought, beside? Now ar't Thou charm'd
 " with thy God? Why, but because Thou
 " ar't now incapable of being charm'd with
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" Aught beside? But charm'd? No no:
 " 'Tis not thy Love of me, but thy penu-
 " rious Condition which brings thee back
 " to me. Therefore dos't thou seek my
 " heavenly Mansions, because thou ar't
 " now frown'd-out from every other as a
 " Nuisance. Therefore dos't Thou now
 " pay thy Court to me and to my Heaven
 " because the Earth and the Pride and
 " Lust of it are tired of paying Court to
 " Thee. Therefore ar't thou desirous of
 " being mine, because thou ar't become
 " the Refuse of every other Being. Nor
 " would'st Thou even yet be mine but
 " that thou has't exhausted every Talent
 " which can enable thee to love, or gain
 " the Affection or Favour of, any Thing
 " besides me. Ah! *Thou has't, indeed, com-*
 " *mitted Fornication with many Lovers, Un-*
 " *grateful, uncivil as Thou was't to me.*
 " *Nevertheless return unto me, saith the*
 " *Lord, and I will receive Thee.* * Was
 " thy Reception to be proportion'd to
 " thy Desert; I know what a One Thou
 " mightest expect for this tardy and forced
 " rather than free Return. I should send
 " thee back for thy Recompence to the
 " Masters thou has't hitherto served in
 " preference to me; and in so doing teach
 " Others, at thy Cost, the Consequence of
 " slighting and abusing the Favours of
 " their God. But ungrateful, dilatory,
 " irreverent

* *Ibid.*

“ irreverent as Thou has’t been, Thou
 “ still art mine : *Return therefore, and I*
 “ *will receive Thee.*” O my Dear Chri-
 stians ! Tell me : How would you be able
 to bear-up against such just, such stinging
 Reproaches ? On merely reflecting, that you
 deserved Such, could you forbear bursting
 with Grief and Confusion ? If it seems to
 You that you should have Courage enough
 to meet them, surely it proceeds from a
 Meanness of Soul which makes you in-
 sensible how very grievous it must be to
 generous Spirits to be upbraided with such
 rustic Ingratitude. Or if you believe, that
 it would give you any Excess of Pain ;
 why will you labour to render it more
 grievous by prolonging, with daily Pro-
 crastinations, your desired Conversion to
 GOD ? GOD, it is true may accept your
 Repentance, tho’ ever so late : But you
 have little Reason to expect that your pre-
 suming on it will induce him to do it.
 Rather have you the greatest Cause to fear,
 that, as your sinful Neglects of him have
 often obliged him to abscond from you
 with his Grace, so may your presumptuous
 Tardiness of returning to him may incense
 him to withdraw himself wholly from
 you, never to shew his lovely Countenance to
 You more. For, as St. *Augustin* very justly
 remarks, tho’ “ God in his tender Mercy
 “ has promised Pardon to every penitent

“ Sinner, yet he never promised to any
 “ Sinner the Time to repent.” Why then
 will you, O sinful Christians, neglect the
 present Time for Conversion, which is the
 only Time you can call your own? Why
 put off your Repentance to the Future
 which may never be your own?

Return then, return, O Dearest Fellow
 Sinners. Let me conjure you in the very
 Words of your GOD : *Return* to him from
 this Instant, by resolving on a serious,
 speedy, penitential Confession at this Holy
 Time. As many of You as hear me, re-
 flect, that you have lost already but too
 much of Life. Some more, Some less;
 but All of you have sinn'd: Let All of
 You then from this Day set about redeem-
 ing the Time you have abused, by enlarg-
 ing, with your future Improvement of Time,
 the Eternity which is in your Power.
 Farewell then, idle Pastimes! Farewell,
 senseless Occupations! Farewell cruel Enjoy-
 ments of the Earth which have robb'd us, of
 so many and so precious Hours, Days, nay
 Years! O! How shocking is the bare Re-
 membrance of You? Barely to reflect, that,
 late as it is in Life for us, we have so long
 so important a Journey yet to begin towards
 Heaven and Eternity, oppresses Thought.
 And yet the very Reflecting on our pressing
 Need: That we are so far advanced in our
 Day of Life, and still so very distant from
 our

our Journey's End, may urge us to press faster on: And thus shall the Industry of a few well-managed Months fill-up with precious Fruits of Virtue, all our former mispent Years and amply repair all past Delays. Thus shall we double our Eternity of Love for God, and force him to forget our past Ingratitude and rude Returns of all the Mercies he has heap'd upon us.

II. However there are not wanting, even among Christians, Some inconsiderate Creatures so void of Generosity, as to care but little how ungrateful they proved to God, if they could but escape his Punishments. It is losing Time then to expostulate with Such, or to try to dissuade them from trifling with God, by Arguments drawn from the noble Motives of Love and Gratitude and due Respect for him. Not One of these will touch their meaner Hearts. Such Language will only serve to urge them, after the Example of the *Jews* to *take-up the Stones* of fresh Ingratitudes to throw at God. Fear, servile Fear and sordid Interest are the only Motives which have Weight with them. And is there any Dearth of Motives of this kind? No, Beloved, no. If hitherto I have not argued from Principles of Terror, to dissuade You from putting-off any longer the happy Day of your sincere Conversion, the blessed Period

Period which shall renew you and make you live again to God and live forever; It is because my favourable Thoughts of you inclined me to believe, that more exalted Motives would better suit and more successfully affect such noble, generous, polish'd, grateful Souls as Those I hope I have to deal with in addressing me to You. What tho' you have been Sinners hitherto; after all, I trust, you are not quite so harden'd, that the Reflection on God's Goodness to you will not suffice to win you over to a speedy Repentance. After all, wide as you have lived from God, tardy as you have been to return to him; you have still, I hope, some Respect, some Tendernefs, some Gratitude, some Affection left for him: You cannot then be quite such obstinate Offenders, that Nothing but Lash and Whip can bring you back to your Indulgent Lord, who has borne with you so long only to gain you to himself. If then the Endearments of your Almighty Sovereign will work upon you; what Need, what Room is there for Arguments of Terror? Yet pardon, gentle Christians, if, to the soothing mild Discourse, which, anxious for your Safety yet tender of your Delicacy, I have held with you, I now proceed to add Some Reasonings of a sharper more awaking Nature for Souls of baser Alloy, who stand in need
of

of Terrors to bring them back to their expecting God.

And O! What Terrors hover over their unthinking Heads! O obstinate Sinners! For now to You are all my Words address'd. O perverse Triflers with Time, Eternity, Yourself and God! In what have You hitherto consumed your Days? Has it been in Sin or Innocence? In Virtues or in every Vice? With God or with the World? Ah! Did you keep but Each a Journal of your Actions; how full how croud'd would not every Day's Account appear? But of what? Of glorious Actions done for Eternity? For your Souls? For God? Not at all: But of Idleness, of Impertinences, of Vanities, of Vices, of Enormities, of Scandals given into to please the World, the Flesh, the common Enemy of God and You. What tho' you have no Journal by You; every Witness to your Lives, even I, can make it for You, and you shall own it, tho' short, a faithful Abstract. As for your Childhood I pass it over unheeded, That being a Stage of Life more directed by Nature than Reason. But soon as enter'd into Puerility, O! What Intricacy, what a Confusion of Disorders appears! From the first opening of your Reason, how inverted a Use did you not make of it? How soon was that hapless Power assail'd by the Troop of your humour'd Passions? Assail'd, *did I say?*
How

How soon was It not subdued and enslaved? What Slaughter did you not suffer them to make of your Reason, of Freewill, of Grace, of every noble Faculty of your Souls? As you grew-up into Youths, how did not Passion and Vice shoot-up with you? How were you not, every Year, every Day, torne and divided by the Tumults of your contrasting Appetites; by Loves; by Hatreds; by Mirths; by Melancholy? O the Weakness! O the Imprudences! O the rash Attempts! O what innumerable Sallies of Despair, of Presumption, of Obstinacy, of Inconsistency, made you almost each Minute differ from yourselves! How have you not loiter'd-out such and such Hours, Days and Weeks and Months, now at Coffee-houses, Taverns, and Places of riotous Resort; now at less nauseous but not more improving Parties; here wedged-in with Sharpers at a Gaming-Table; there with Ladies at a Tea-board; incessantly employ'd at-home, abroad, in Houses or in Streets, in meditating or in practising some Vice or Other; in Drinking, Quarrelling, Fighting, Challenging, Tricking, Defaming, Lying, Swearing, leud Discourses or lascivious Looks? And those unnumber'd Nights of which the Reckoning is lost? How have not they been consumed in Dancing, Fiddling, Conforts, Plays, and public Dissipations, if not in private Vices not to be named among Christians?

Christians ? And Church ? And the Holy Sacraments ? And Prayer ? And Sermon ? Ah what Splittings of Half-Hours have not They been hurried-over with ; when you have honour'd or rather disgraced them with your Presence, to loiter-away some leisure Minutes, you knew not where else to waste ; or when you have thought it necessary to save Appearances ? But let us pass-on to your Manhood. Here indeed I remark less Levity in your Conduct but not less Guilt : Rather, on the contrary, are your Crimes more grievous, since You-yourself are become less giddy. What Occupation has Any-One of you given-up your Years to, which has not fill'd the Measure of your Iniquity ? To the Bar ? But O ! what iniquitous Sentences, have you not sign'd, where you were Judges ! What unjust Pleadings, what unfair Proceedings, are you not black with, where Lawyers ! Do You govern ? O what Disorders in yourselves and Subjects ! Are you Subjects ? O how refractory your Conduct ! O Physicians ! What Ignorance, what Indolence, what Rashnesses are you not loaded with ? Merchants, what Frauds fill-up not more your Coffers than your Consciences ! And O the Lies, the Perjuries, the Impositions, with which You, Tradesmen, are daily toiling to promote your sordid Lucre ! Every Pains has been taken by you, in more than one Way, and by more than one Artifice, to soften and

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sweeten the irksome Fatigues of this ill-spent mortal Life: But for the immortal Existence no Thought has been employ'd. What Time has been assign'd with any Fervor or Sincerity, to the real Duties of your several Stations, to your Soul's Salvation, to the Almighty's Honour? Alas, alas! Every Instant from your Birth to your present State (the Time of your Infancy excepted) has been Nothing but a Mixture of Christian Profession and Heathenish Practice; a Confusion of Sacraments with Sins; a perpetual Circle of Confessions and Relapses; A detestable Checker-Work of Prayers, and Fasts, and Alms, and Masses, and Communions, and Luxury, and Avarice, and Fraudulency, and Ambition. In short, O stubborn Triflers with Time! Your Conduct has been as vile and as unsteady as That of the People of *Sion*, ever moving in a Rotation of the same accumulated Crimes: And therefore to Every-One of You, as to Each-One of Them, may I repeat the Prophet *Jeremiab's* (what shall I term it?) Lamentation or Reproach: *How exceedingly vile art Thou become, iterating thy Ways!* * Ah Heaven grant, in It's unwearied Mercy, that No-One of you, by sharing in their Guilt, may share in their Punishment! But how does not the terrible Menace of the Almighty make me tremble for Every Individual of you: *From hence also Thou shalt go: And thy Hands* (of

* Chap.
ii.

(of Guilt) *shall be upon thy Head; because the Lord hath destroy'd thy Confidence, and Thou shalt have Nothing prosperous.* *

* *Ibid.*

O the filthy detestable Journal: Away with it. Already do I repent of becoming your Examiner, for the Sake of spairing both Scandal to the Innocent, and Confusion to You, O Sinners. And why should I raise a Blush on your Cheeks with a Remembrance of the precious Treasures of Time you have lavish'd; when all the Blood which can flush your Faces, tho' It should even gush through every Pore, will not suffice to recall one mispent irrevocable Hour back? Ah! Lament then and take-on, O wretched Bankrupts of Virtue, Grace and Time! Weep: Weep with inconfolable Tears over the Loss of so many valuable Months, so many precious Years, you might have purchased Heaven with. "Who, "
to use the mournful Expressions of an ancient
 " *Holy Father*, Who shall restore to You
 " the Years You have squander'd in Empti-
 " nefs?" Of all the Labours and Sollicitudes you have laid-out (you know best in what Bank) who shall pay the Principal or even Interest? All the Thoughts, all the Actions you put-out to any but God, are sunk into Nothing but Guilt. All the fair Promises of the Traitor-World now fail you: And that World, which hurried you, by it's Insinuations, into Ruin, is hastily

running to Ruin itself. Ah! weep then and weep incessantly; for all your Remedy is in your Tears.

Nevertheless so far, Beloved, is the perverse Part of Christianity from weeping over the Years they have spent the worst, that they laugh in their Hearts at my Persuasions; as if I meant only, by certain melancholy Reflections, to rob them of all the Pleasures of their greener Years, to precipitate them ere it be Time into all the Gloomy Cares of Old-Age. “ Alas! *Is their*
 “ *constant Cry*: Alas! Too rapidly already
 “ does Youth fly away: Short is the Space
 “ in which we can relish Enjoyment; and
 “ ere we are aware the Maturity of Life
 “ will hurry upon us: Then, then shall
 “ we find Opportunity and Leisure enough
 “ to give ourselves up to God. Mean
 “ while we are otherwise taken-up. If with
 “ such untimely Devotion we now break-
 “ in upon our only Days of Enjoyment;
 “ when shall we be able to get a Taste
 “ of Diversions?” O *Satan, Satan!* What
 flattering illusive Ways Thou has’t found-
 out to lead along with thee, Companions to
 thy Miseries, such Multitudes of Catholics
 whom God, with amorous Tenderness had
 destin’d to the vacant Thrones of Glory!
 But ah Traitor! Is it their Youth, perfidious
 Serpent, which Thou would’st gull them
 out of? No, no: Thou art persuaded,
 that

that probably they will either never quit their Youth without quitting Life also, or never quit their Vices with their Youth to live a Life of Penance and Virtue: And therefore art thou in expectation, that, robbing them of the Flower of Life, thou may'st easily cheat them of the Fruit also. But O my much beloved, tho' obstinate Sinners! How do not I wish, that you would once seriously learn to baffle the base Artifices of this infernal Impostor! I Imagine, O Triflers, notwithstanding all your Tardiness, all your Frowardness, that you are not such Enemies to eternal Happiness as to be resolved on being eternally miserable: And therefore, as You know you cannot persist in Sin to the End of Life and be saved, I do not suppose, that Any of you are so stupid as to design putting-off your Repentance till Death. No, no: You purpose All, I dare vouch for you, to be very good before you die. But tell me: Do you know then for certain when you shall die? Every-One of You is too weak, too irresolute, too pusillanimous to give himself up in this very Instant to God: You all wait a more favourable Opportunity: And yet are you not conscious, that you cannot even guess when that Opportunity will offer? Nay are you not very uncertain whether it will ever offer or no. You do not sin now with the Intent of sinning to the
End,

End, I know: But you live-on in Sin with the illusive Design of repenting hereafter, saying to Yourselves, with the perverse Sons of *Heli*, with whom you are so likely, to be disappointed and (disappointed) to be lost, "Bye and Bye, Bye and Bye. "When we are growing Old then will we "think on doing Penance." Bye and Bye, *do you say?* Ah deluded Mortals! This *Bye and Bye* is that uncertain Future about which the Devil concerns himself but little, so he can but prevail upon you to give-up to him the certain present Instant. "Yes, "yes, *says the great St. Basil*, This artful "Serpent, ever subtil at deceiving, often "robs us of the present Day's Leisure by "cunningly flattering our Imagination "with the Prospect of the Morrow."

O the rank Folly, Christians, of suffering ourselves to be thus imposed upon! And And yet O the Number of Christians who are the Dupes of it! Ah perverse Triflers with Time Eternity and GOD! What but This is the Cause of your Delays? O the unhappy Wife of *Lot*! What but a like Argument, was her undoing? For do you imagin, Christians, that, when She was seized with the anxious Inclination to look-back, in spite of the Divine Commandment, and to cast one parting Look upon her flaming Country, no opportune Remorse, no friendly Check of Conscience call'd upon her to
desist

desist and say'd to her: "Look not that
 "Way, O Woman; for thy God forbids
 "Thee? Who knows, that, for turning
 "towards thy guilty Patriots with thy Eyes,
 "offended Heaven may involve Thee in
 "one common Guilt with them, who darest
 "to accompany them in Rebellion?" But;
 says the Flattery of a temerary Thought:
 "'Tis but for this one Time. I will but
 "cast this pitying Glance and then press
 "forward to the Mountain. There I'll
 "crave Pardon of my God; and thus after
 "gratifying my Curiosity, satisfy his Justice."
 She look'd then; she indulg'd the restless
 Passion; she gratified the Rage of her
 curious Desire in the Sight of those sulphu-
 rous Flames: But then? O then, when she
 thought to move forward, when she would
 look towards the Mount which was to be at
 once the Stage and Witness of her Repentance,
 her Life was at an End: Lost to all Life,
 all Sense, all Motion, she was petrified to a
 Statue of Salt. In short, as St. *Augustin*,
 says, "Where she look'd-back, *where she*
 "*halted, where she sinn'd*, there, there she
 "remain'd." Long is it, O Beloved, that
 You, like this unhappy Woman, have been
 call'd by Heaven to seek your Safety in the
 Holy Mount, (*that is*) in the Sublimity of
 Christian Perfection, by turning your Looks,
 your Inclinations forever away from those
 Concupiscences with which the whole Earth

is

is inflamed, is burning, is almost consumed. Often has the Voice of a salutary Inspiration said to you: "Flee from this Sin, " from that dangerous Attachment, from " this other Incendiary Passion or Occasion. " *Save your Life: Look not back; neither " stay in all the Country round: But save " yourself in the Mountain, lest You also " perish withall.*" And how often have not You, like that female Dupe of Delay, rejected the wholesome Cogitation, or put it off with a *To-morrow*. "Pooh There " will be Time enough to think seriously " hereafter." But what, if That Time, That *Hereafter* should never be at your Disposal? And this may very probably be your Case. You, O Young Man, give a Loose at present to every flattering Passion and still promise your Conscience a Time for the Acquisition of Christian Virtues. But when shall this desirable Time come? When shall all these fine Promises be fulfill'd? "O It cannot be yet a while: " I am not yet in a settled Way." It must be then, I suppose, at some Time or other of your Manhood. But how can That well be? Then alas You will have too much Business on your hands: Then you will be wholly taken-up with the Improvement of your Substance, the Advancement of your Sons, the Disposal of your Daughters, and brigueing for Employments or Settlements

Settlements for them, or else perhaps carking for Bread to support them with. Much Time then you are likely to have, in that Stage of Life, for acquiring any Virtues you are not already possess of. So then, you think better on it, and resolve to put it off to Old-Age? But what, if you should die while you are Young? And are you sure, you shall not? What Certainty, nay what rational Probability, have You, that your presumptuous Delays will not be earlyly overtaken by reprovng destroying Vengeance, any more than Many Thousands before you have had, who, designing to be exemplary Penitents in their Old-Age, have been, like *Ophni* and *Phineas*, made Examples of Terror to all Triflers with God and his Grace, and died Reprobate Sinners in the very Prime of Life? But I'll go farther and admit you to be in a moral Certainty, nay (if you chuse it) in a physical one, that you shall live to a desirable Old-Age. What then? "Why then, my
 " Passions will be tired, my Concupiscence
 " worn-out, and my Blood grown cold:
 " My Affairs will be settled, and my
 " Thoughts digested; and to the Business
 " of the Soul I shall then be in a Condition
 " to give-up a whole Soul unalienated,
 " undisturb'd, unliable to the Levities attending a more Active Time of Life."
 O the fine Season for returning to God!

You too O Young Maiden! Why do not
 You answer the gracious amorous Calls of
 your loving Spouse the lovely Jesus? Why
 slight the Graces, the Invitations with
 which he industriously courts you to be
 his own? "O my Time is not yet come:
 "I shall give him Nothing but a Heart di-
 "vided amidst a Thousand opposit con-
 "trasting Affections and Desires, if I give
 "myself up to Devotion before my Mind
 "and Station be fix'd." And ah! When,
 think you, will That be? When is God
 likely to have any Share in You, if not
 now? Soon will come-on the seemingly
 joyous, the gay and giddy Times of Wooing
 and of Wedding: And judge you, if,
 amidst the busy Impertinences of those
 dissipated Days, all for the most part wasted
 in Nothing but Licentiousness, you will be
 able to give-up many Moments to God
 and to your Soul. Judge you, if you will
 then have Leisure to remember the Nicety
 of Christian Temperance in the midst of
 Entertainments; the Strictness of Christian
 Reserve in every public or private Party,
 the unspotted Purity of Tongue and Actions,
 with the perfect Piety of Heart, always be-
 coming the devout Sex whether Maidens or
 Matrons. There will too, very probably,
 come the Times of breeding and bringing-
 forth; and what great Acquisition of Virtues,
 think you, will you be able to make, when
 wholly

wholly taken-up with the Qualms, the Pains, the Cares and Anxieties of Pregnancy? What Tenderness will remain in your Heart for Devotion and Piety, when your whole Heart shall be engross'd by sollicitous Tenderness for a Husband and Children? Will not the Care and Concern for your Family, in which most probably you will then be, take you wholly off from all Thoughts of God and Eternity? And will you too, notwithstanding, trust to the Incertainty of Old-Age to grow Good? Ah! Believe me, Dear deluded Fellow-Christians: You deceive yourselves very grossly. Believe me: You trust to a broken Reed in trusting to Old-Age. Believe me: If you are not till then provided with Christian Virtue; you very probably never will be. Believe me: In your Old-Age, if you ever attain to it, the Attachments of the World, the Delicacy of the Flesh, the inordinate Love of Pleasures Interests and Pride, which have not been totally destroy'd in your Youth, will root themselves so deeply so thickly in your Souls as to leave God's Grace no single Space to grow in, much less to shoot-up one single Sprig of Christian Virtue.

Ah too truly is This the Case among Mankind. Too true is it, that their choicest Days are devoted to the Service of the Devil; who by little and little robs them insensibly

of their whole Life. Too true is it, that the Desires of giving themselves up to God are put off to the next Day, the next Month, the next Year, till Life itself generally fails. Thus shamefully is human Life lavish'd : And in what? Why --- by the Women, in eating, sleeping, dressing visiting, Play and fruitless Diversions : In Modes, in Punctilios, in Appointments and useless if not hurtful Parties : At best, in domestic Cares, in impertinent Niceties of Family Grandure, and the Triflings of an imaginary Oeconomy. In short, to speak in the most favourable Terms, They are *busied about Many Things* : But about *the One-Thing necessary*, what is thought? What is done? Nothing, mere Nothing. And how are the Men employed? Few better; but Many worse. If they are Persons of Birth and Fashion, of Power or Prerogative; their Days are miserably divided between the Court, the Bar, and their own Home; now paying, now receiving Homage; here intriguing there deciding; and ever filling their Heads with Intricacies, their Hearts with Anguish; wholly devoted to the Public, intirely absent to Themselves : If They are Tradesmen; how intensely are they not busied in working, running this way and that, to buy, to sell, to cheat, to lie, to swear and forswear, to dissipate their Substance
in

in search of more, to consume their Strength their Health, their Senses, their Spirits in pursuit of Gain, without Respit, without Breathing-Time, without Rest or the Desire of it! Thus eager are They to give to *Cæsar what is Cæsar's*, nay more than what is his. Thus punctual are they to give to the Earth their All which is of the Earth, their Flesh and Appetites; nay more their Souls and Affections, which belong not to the Earth, but to Heaven. But to give to God *what belongs to God*, what Eagerness, what Punctuality is shewn? To promote the Advantages of the Soul, what Pains are taken? To think on Eternity, on God, what Time is employ'd? "O That *will be thought on afterwards.*" Ah! false deceitful *Afterwards*, Thou Traitor to Christianity! Ah base and guileful *Afterwards*, Thou Murderer of Christian Souls! Ah vile ungrateful *Afterwards*, Thou cruel Assassin of Time Eternity and Bliss! Ah *Afterwards*, Thou sworn Enemy to Man's Salvation and to God's Honour! Shall Man at the Peril of his Salvation trust to thy delusive Promises, who has't so often fail'd? "Afterwards (*do you say Christians*) *afterwards you will give yourselves up to God? Now you will persist in sinning and Repentance will come afterwards?*" O insolent Presumption! So You may stone the Divine Mercy with obdurate Contempt
of

of his Graces, and God must not wreak Vengeance on You? He may abscond from your Hearts, while you are disposed to refuse him Entrance; but may not withdraw himself wholly and absolutely refuse to enter into them again, when you shall think fit to invite him with a too late Repentance? What then do you make of God? Or what shall I make of your Arrogance? Surely if you do not blaspheme your Divine Sovereign in Words, while you persist in this Conduct, you cannot be very wide of blaspheming him in your Actions and blaspheming in your Hearts. Look ye then, perverse Christians, with trembling aching Pity I tell you: If you repent not now; then, in all probability, you never will repent. If you do not now give yourselves up to God; there are a thousand Chances to One against you, that you never will give yourselves to him, or he will never accept of you, when you do. You know, that the same God who says to us his Ministers, *He who hears you, hears me*, speaks to you by my Mouth: If then you hear not the Words of God, now once for all inviting you to a sincere immediate Repentance; *Therefore* is it that you hear not, because you are not of God. For *He, who is of God, beareth the Word of God*, as my very Text assures you. In short, if you trifle any longer
with

with GOD; if you set him again at Defiance. If, instead of returning to him, you *throw Stones at him*, by rejecting this Invitation to Penance which He now vouchsafes to you by my Mouth; there are the greatest Odds against you, that It may be the last Mercy he has decreed to shew you; It may be, that you will die in a State of final Impenitence and that He, whom your past Sins have forced for a long time to abscond from your Hearts, shall, in his just Indignation punish your Obduracy as he did That of the *Jews* in our Gospel: *They, like You, took up Stones to throw at him; But JESUS hid himself and went out of the Temple:* So will he depart from the Temple of your Hearts, leave you to die in Sin, leave you to be eternally lost.

So then, Christians, You think to put GOD off with an *Afterwards*? Ah! hear St. *Augustin* and blush at such self-deceiving Arrogance. “*If Afterwards, If some* “one Time or other; why not now?” Yes, Beloved Brethren, if you design one Time or other to tread in a safer Path, why not seize the present Time, which is the only Time you can call your own? Why transfer so good so useful so necessary a Work to a Time of Life, which you know not that You shall ever arrive to? Whence do you conclude, that You shall
ever

ever attain to that Month, that Year, that Stage of Life to which you design to put-off your Conversion? Do you know for certain the determin'd Age at which Mankind are sentenced to Hell Fire? O all-receiving Jaws of Hell! Are there None but Old-Men, Dotards, Impenitents of Fourscore, yet burning in the unconsuming Fire? Ah! Yes there are: Too, too many are there in that horrid Abyfs, Men of thirty, twenty, fifteen Years of Age, now and forever weeping and gnashing their Teeth. What then are you waiting for, O dilatory Mortals, to secure you from those never-ceasing Flames? Already is the Eighteenth Century almost half elapsed since Christ first preach'd Perfection to Christians: And is not the Day yet come for You, O Catholics, so much as to set about endeavouring at it. So long is it since Christ first gave himself to You and is not the joyful blessed Day yet come, on which you can resolve to give yourselves up to him in a sincere Conversion? O! if you mean to do it one-Day, why not on this Day? Why, ah why? "If some Time or other; why not now?" Thus warmly does the Holy Father reason. But with all due Submission to the Saint, there is an Argument yet stronger. Give me then Leave to reverse the Phrase and you will feel it, if you have any Feeling, wound more deeply still. I say then: *If*

not

not now, why one Time or other? You are now
 so presumptuous as wilfully to resist God:
 And why then shall not He, one Time or
 other, pay you in Coin with a determin'd
 Resistance? God invites you to repent inces-
 santly: You will not at present: And pray,
 why afterwards? "If not now why one
 "Time or other?" Ah! how many Years
 has not the adorable crucified *Jesus* held-
 out his Arms to invite you to the Love of
 him on his Cross? And shall You, rather
 than disgust your insatiable Passions, still
 persist in rejecting his Endearments and
 returning him ungrateful Repulses? And
 shall *Jesus* have still Cause to complain, by
 the Mouth of his Prophet: *I have spread*
wide my Hands all day to an incredulous
People, which goeth, in a way not good,
after their own Cogitations: A People, who
continually provoke me to Anger before my
Face? * Alas, unhappily unthinking Crea- * *Isaiah*
 tures! What shall become of you, if you ^{lxv.}
 continue to deal thus with God; who has
 sworn to return Contempt with Contempt,
 Repulse for Repulse? O tremble then and
 avoid the terrible Sentence: *There shall be*
a Smoke in my Fury, a Fire burning all
the Day. Behold it is written before me:
I will not hold Silence, but I will render
and repay into their Bosom. † Have a † *Ibid.*
 Care then of trifling with him any longer.
 If to-day you reject his Grace; who knows,
 VOL. II. H h when

when he will ever accept your Conversion? "if not now; why one Time or other?" O Souls more precious to me than the Apple of my Eye! Weigh well your Circumstances, the Circumstance of GOD. GOD will lose no one Ray of Glory of all his heavenly Attributes, tho' you should absolutely perish. You, if You are not wholly saved, will be utterly undone: And all the Misery of your Ruin will be yours forever. And if you seize not this immediate Instant to begin the important Work of your Salvation; tell me, when will the Instant come in which you can be sure that You shall undertake it: You, who are not assured that This is not to be your last? To-day your *Jesus* kindly calls you to be his own: To-day he invites you to yield to his gracious Endearments: To-day, he entreats you once more (perhaps once more for all) to repair your former Delays by throwing aside your past Obduracy, and melting into Gratitude for his long Sufferance. To-day then, *if you shall hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* * And you know, from your Saviour in this Day's Gospel, that, if you hear him not, you are not his. For *He, who is of GOD, beareth the Words of GOD.* To-day then, O loitering Christians, to-day before to-morrow, *I say,* let it be that you begin seriously to yield yourselves up to *Jesus*. If you do not

* *Psalms*
xciv.

do it to-day, ah! when shall you do it?
 “If not now; why at some Time or other?”
 What say You? You will, within a few
 Years; when your Passions are a little less
 contumacious; your Spirits a little more
 turn’d; when Your Proneness to Vice is
 something less vehement, the Ardor of
 your Blood a little more abated, and your
 Thoughts and Affections are totally settled?
 But GOD, says not This: *To-day*, he cries:
To-day, if You shall hear his Voice, barden
not your Hearts. You say: It shall be a
 few Months hence; when that inordinate
 Affection shall be glutted; when this Affair
 of Interest is finish’d. No, says GOD, *To-*
day, or never. To-day, if you hear his
Voice, barden not your Hearts. But You
 chuse the Holy-Week to do it in. “Then,
 “*you think*, the Days, sadden’d with the
 “Sufferings of Christ, render’d pompously
 “melancholy with the penitential Piety of
 “the Church, will better charm your
 “Souls to Compunction and Penance.”
 But I say, Christians: If you put it off till
 then; it is more than likely, that your De-
 signs of Repentance will then be still fainter;
 your actual Desires of it extinguish’d and
 your present Dispositions for Compunction
 vanish’d into Smoke. GOD therefore bids
 you, yield to him on this very Day. *To-*
day, if you shall hear his Voice, barden not
your Hearts. What! To-day you are un-
 willing

willing to do it on any Terms? In the Name then of that Divine Lord, whose Grace you now reject, I must tell you, that another Time, when (may-be) you would be willing, you will not be able. And, to return to our Argument, " If not " now; pray, why at one Time or other? In a word, what room have you to think, that you shall do it at any other Time more certainly than now?

Answer me not, Dear Brethren, as the *Jews* did our Saviour: *Do not we say well, that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a Devil?* Think not, that it is from any malignant Motive I speak to you thus harshly. That God, who judges between you and me knows that I speak not thus, for the bare sake of troubling your Peace with stern prophetic Menaces. But how can I love your Souls, or save my own; without suggesting to You, that, if you yield not to the Voice of God this Day; if you put off still longer God's courteous Invitations to Repentance and a Life more innocent and edifying; it may be, that, more and more infatuated with the Flattery of your deceitful Senses, with the Fraud of earthly Joys and Interests, with the Violence of evil Inclinations and Habits and Examples, you will deeply plunge, ere you are aware, into some fatal Labyrinth of Vice, out of which, when it is to late,
You

You will wish in vain to extricate yourselves?

Be mindful of the Folly of your Ancestors; And let their just Chastisement be to You a Lesson of more Wisdom. *To-day* (this very Day) *if you hear the Voice of the Lord, harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation according to the Day of Temptation in the Wilderness, where your Fathers* (says the Lord) *tempted me, tried me, and saw my Works.* The Jews, while in the Desert, design'd, as much as you do, to give themselves up to God: But when? O! When they should be in Possession of the Land of *Promise*. But mean Time were they continually tempting the Divine Justice to Vengeance with fresh Sins, continually trying the Divine Mercy with fresh Delays of Repentance, till at last they saw in Effect, and saw to their Sorrow, the Works of his Rigour as well as they had seen Those of his Lenity. And They who ungratefully, uncivilly, presumptuously, trifled with God, putting-off their Return to him till they should be in the Land of *Promise* and in a State of Rest and Tranquillity, were justly disappointed; were excluded forever from the promised Inheritance by untimely Death; and died in a State of Exile, a State of Sin, a State of Obstinacy, a State of Wrath. Have a care then, Beloved, that You act not like Them,
Tempt

Tempt not the Lord your God any longer with Delays, with Puts-off, with Slowness of Belief and Hardness of Heart. For should you, Deaf to his Words and Blind to his Will, tempt his Justice with Future Tardiness; try his Mercy with fresh Ingratitude; you will see and fatally see the Works of his Equity as well as you have experienced Those of his Clemency. You will find to your Sorrow, when past a Remedy, that God can be rigorously Just as well as tenderly merciful; that he can be angry as well as Patient; that he can resent and punish as well as relent and forgive; and that, tho' He be slow to *Anger*, yet, when exasperated, he is terrible in Wrath. Remember that He, who punish'd the *Jews* in the Desert, can punish you with equal Disappointment; if you copy their Presumption. Remember that, if, like the *Jews* in the Temple, instead of melting into Compunction at the life-giving Word of God, you take-up the Stones of Delay and Neglect to throw at him, as they did; he can hide himself from you as he did from them. From them *JESUS hid himself and went out of the Temple*. Tremble then, O Christians, tremble for your Safety. Sinners or Innocents, tremble still. For Ruin, irrevocable Ruin hovers over your Heads. What means that mournful Veil, which, (this day) covering Every Crucifix, hides from

from your longing Eyes the lovely Semblance of your martyr'd Jesus. Ah! It is too big with Meaning not to make me tremble, if it does not You. It means, O Innocents, that, if you delay any longer to improve the Grace of God within you, if you do not from this Day, this Instant, resolve effectually to give yourselves up to his endearing Invitations to Perfection; soon shall You be no longer Innocents: Soon shall He hide from you not only his Image but his Grace. It means, O Sinners, to remind you that, if you catch not on this Day, this present Minute, the fleeing Grace he offers to you by my Mouth, if *you are not of God and therefore bear not his Word* which I now utter to you, but *take-up the Stones* of Obduracy and delay to throw at him and his Mercy; He who has already *hid himself* from you with his Grace, provoked to it by your past Sins, shall, in just Punishment of your future Hardness of Heart, utterly abandon you with his Mercy and *go out of the Temple* of your Hearts: Never (ah never!) more to return. O dreadful Hazard to run! O dreadful Consequence of running such a Hazard! Which of you All then can be so wretchedly ungrateful, so grossly uncivil, so stupidly absent to yourselves and God, as, in spite of him, to trust so dread a Consequence to Chance? After all, God has not been so sparing of his

his Bounties to us, that We ungratefully should chuse his Hatred rather than return him Love for Love. No: He has loved and still does love us to an infinit Excess of Love and fruitful Love. After All, God has not used us so rudely, or with so little Tenderness and Complacency, that We, who pique ourselves on such Good-breeding towards One-another, should give the Flower of our Love and Life to Vanities and rudely offer Him the Dregs of our Affections and the offensive Refuse of all other Beings. No: He gave-up to us in the most gracious manner all he had to give us: Lived for us, suffer'd for us, died for us. After All, God has not made our Salvation so precarious as that we cannot make it sure by faithfully co-operating with his Grace. Shall we then wilfully consent to damn ourselves, by trusting to the uncertain Future rather than seize the present Minute to be wholly and forever his. No: My all-gracious God! Forbid that Any here be so ungrateful, so uncivil to Thee, so injurious to Themselves as to risk the Loss of Thee forever by losing this precious, this present, and (for Aught we can gainsay) this final, critical, decisive Minute. Melt then, my God, for Thou alone can'st do it, melt the Hearts Thou has't already warm'd; and make us from this Instant wholly irrevocably

tably Thine, We beseech thee in thy unwearied Mercy, *In the Name, &c.*

Fifth INDICATION of the PASSION.

IT is no less surprising than remarkable, Beloved, Auditors, what very opposite Effects one and the same Cause shall oftentimes give Birth to. The same Sun-beams, which dissolve a Rock of Ice into a liquid Stream and the firmest Wax into a Fluid, shall harden the most yielding Marsh into a solid Path and the moistest Clay into Steel. Murder, of all Vices, has the nearest Resemblance to the Fire of Hell, which at once, scorching the Bodies of the wretched Damned with insupportable Excess of Heat, congeals their very Souls with cold impenetrable Despair and which, while with red-hot Vengeance it makes their over-boiling Juices flow down their Cheeks in scalding Tears, chills their whole miserable Frame even to a gnashing of Teeth. If the Butchery of shedding human Blood, assisted by the Extremes of Distress It occasions, is capable of mollifying to Pity the very Heart of the Assassin which before was congeal'd into relentless Barbarity; It has also the Talent of hardening, in the Breast of the Injured, the softest, most tender and yielding Compassion into the most inflexible obdurate Cruelty and Revenge. For an Instance of

this Truth we are obliged to the History of *Cyrus the Great*: Great indeed, if, with the World, we deem Those such who have been greatly fortunate because greatly vicious.

When this ambitious Monarch, grown insolent from a long Series of Prosperity and desirous of improving it to the Enlargement of the Boundaries of his already exorbitant Power, had turn'd his Arms against the *Scythians*, he marched against *Tomyris* their Queen with a numerous Army; but found her prepared with at least an equal Force, to dispute Victory with him. Unwilling therefore to trust his Fortune to the Hazard of a pitch'd Battle, he has Recourse to Artifice; feigns a hasty Retreat; and, by this Means, drawing the *Scythians* into a Snare, puts them All to the Sword, and, among the Rest, the Queen's only Son whom she had sent to head them. Flush'd with this Success he meditates Nothing less than to render himself Master of *Tomyris's* Empire and punish her with the Loss of her Life, for daring to defend her Right and That of her People: Not doubting, but the Death of a Dear a Darling only Son, the Stay and Hope of Herself and Subjects, and the choicest Gem of her Life and Crown, must needs have soften'd her parental tender Soul into too weakly a Compassion to leave her any Power or even
Thought

Thought of making fresh Resistance. But *Cyrus*, was mistaken; The Heart of the injured Princess, instead of melting into Womanish Tears and Sighs for the Loss of an irrevocable Son, fiercely congeal'd into Revenge. Whence, grown inflexibly obdurate in Cruelty, She rais'd a fresh Army more powerful than the Former by as much as It was more exasperated; and, to repay his Fraud with Fraud, drew him into a Snare in his Turn: In which he lost two hundred Thousand of his *Persian* Troops, and after all, his Empire, his Glory, and his Life. But not content with making her conquer'd Enemy refund the Life of her slaughter'd Son, at the Price of his own, She caus'd his Head to be cut-off and thrown into a Vessel of Blood, with these taunting Words; "Drink Tyrant, drink thy Fill of the Liquor thou has't so greedily thirsted after till now. Since Thou has't never yet been satiated with Blood; e'en glut thyself now to a Surfeit of Blood."

The Action was Bloody in *Tomyris* undoubtedly: But the Judgment was just. And what Excesses will not exasperated Compassion run-into, when push'd too far by repeated Injuries from unprovoked and unrelenting Cruelty! O perverse Christians! Whenever I think on this Passage, how do I not tremble, lest a like Judgment should justly over-take Some of you; if you per-

sist much longer in your Obduracy of Heart against God! How long have not Some of You waged an injurious War against, not merely a Fellow Creature, but the God of Hosts? Already have your Crimes murder'd his dear his only begotten Son. And yet so far are you from any present Dispositions to relent, that you are daily machinating fresh Offences against your Maker, as if you mean'd to level at his very Throne and Godhead. Ah! What has the heavenly Monarch done to provoke you to treat him with such base unjust indignant Outrage? Was it an Injury done you to give you Life, Health, Beauty, Sense and every Means of Happiness; that You must pay him with such Insults? Or, if you are obliged to him; if you are infinitely in his Debt for Life and every Blessing you possess in it; why do You wage so obstinate a War against him? Why have you put his lovely Son your loving JESUS to a cruel ignominious Death by your Iniquities? Or why shall his precious Blood not yet suffice to appease your vicious Rage? He came not to fight against you, as did *Tomiris's* Son against the *Persian* Monarch. No: He came to fight along with you and for You. He died not resisting you; but chearfully gave himself up to your Barbarity, to stem with his precious Blood your Fury of resisting him. Why then (ah why!) is not his Blood sufficient

ficient to dissolve your Hatred into Love, your Cruelty into Compassion on the generous Victim of your former unpurchased Enmity? Is it not enough, that You have butcher'd God's eternal Son; unless you try (if possible) to unthronè the Father also? Do You not think yourselves secure from their Resentment after crucifying one Divine Person of the Trinity; unless you crucify the other Two? Ah! Know, that not One of them regrets the Death of JESUS; but your ill Use of it. All Three consented chearfully to give him up to the painful shameful Death your Sins prepared for him; and gave him up, in Fact, to stop your causeless Persecution of him. They are not then disposed to resent the Prodigality with which you have hitherto shed that precious Liquor; if It but melts your Hearts at last into compunctive Tenderness for him. Ah! Yield then, stubborn Sinners; yield, ere it be too late, to the Voice of JESU's Blood.

On next *Good-Friday*, in a Recital of the Passion of this injured Lord, will be exposed to public View the sanglant Wounds and Cuts and Sores and Gashes; the Stripes and Bruises, Dirt and Spittle and Indignities, with which the lovely Form of tender inoffensive JESUS was disfigured by the still reaking Guilt of your unruly Lives. Then will you hear from every bleeding Pore of his, the secret
Voice

Voice of Mercy crying to you, not in the exasperated Tone of a *Tomiris* but in the soothing softening Accents of unwearied Bounty: " O Sinners! Stubborn Sinners! " Will Nothing but my Blood content " You? Behold! I have shed it in Pro- " fusion for you. And was there not " already Blood enough of mine disbursed " to ransom innumerable Worlds; I would " with Pleasure be crucified again for every " One. Nay, gladly would I open every " Pore again to bleed for Every-One of " You; had I not bled enough for All. " Ah! Let not this Blood then flow for " you, in vain. Say only to my eternal " Father, after the *Jews*, but in a purer " Sense than They, *Be his Blood upon us* " *and upon our Children*, on our Actions, " to melt us into contrite Love for him; " and It shall flow upon your Hearts in " a full Stream not of Resentment and " Hatred but of Forgiveness and infinit " Affection. Come then relent at the " Sight of so much Blood lavish'd by You. " But lavish'd? No: I shall not think it " lavish'd if you forbear henceforth to " trample it under Foot. *Sprinkle your-* " *selves but with this Hyssop*, this puri- " fying Liquor; and you shall be cleansed " from all the Filth of the past Crimes " with which you have martyr'd me: " Wash you with this all-rectifying Lotion, " and,

“ and, from all-red as you are with
“ Butcheries of my innocent Flesh, you
“ *shall become whiter than Snow.* Nay
“ drink it inwardly and bathe your very
“ Souls with it. *Drink, Sinners, Drink*
“ *your Fill of this Liquor, which you so*
“ *greedily thirsted after while in Sin. Tho’*
“ *once your Passions could not have their*
“ *Glut of my Blood;* at least now let my
“ Blood satiate your Affections to a per-
“ fect Plenitude of Grace and Bliss and
“ Glory.” Who knows but these endear-
ing Sentiments of loving all-forgiving Cle-
mency, which every gaping Wound of his
is big with, may overcome your yet un-
conquer’d Obstinacy? who knows but,
listening with an Ear of Grace, to this
pathetic Language of your God, you may
in earnest, once for all, resolve to give
yourselves to him in a sincere immediate
Repentance? In Hopes of This it is that
I presume to crave, that next *Good-*
Friday you would devote a Portion of
your Time to a close pious serious Con-
templation of the Sufferings of your Lord;
that his cruental Passion may not be re-
new’d in vain for You. But then be-
ware you put not off your Purpose of Re-
pentance till that Day. None of You
All are certain you shall live to see it.
And tho’ you should; if you go-on till
then

then exasperating your already more than sufficiently exasperated Saviour; his Patience may by that Time be urged to Fury, his Clemency to Rigour, and his Forgiveness to chastising Vengeance. Remember that from the Blood of JESUS flow two different Streams; a Flood of boundless Bliss to Innocents and contrite Penitents; but to relentless Reprobates a Flood of unextinguishable Fire. Have a Care then, lest, by persisting in a State of Sin one Day, one instant longer, you force insulted JESUS to reverse your Sentence. O what a dreadful Case will not yours be; if, to-morrow, next Hour, a few Minutes hence, your yet Compassionate Redeemer, incensed at your presumptuously delaying This, should leave you in his Wrath, plunge you dead to Grace in the Flood of Fire, kindled by his precious Blood abused, and with stern Indignation say to Any-One of You:

“ Drink, blood-thirsty Wretch, even drink
 “ thy Fill of the Liquor Thou has’t thirsted
 “ after hitherto. Since Thou wouldst not
 “ be satiated with my precious Blood,
 “ to a Satiety of Bliss; go glut thyself
 “ even to a Surfeit of the interminable
 “ Flood of Fire which thy perverse Abuse
 “ of that Blood has drawn from it!” O
 what a dreadful Sentence to incur! And
 what

what ground can you have to hope that this will not be your Mis-hap? What room will you have to appeal from the Almighty's Rigour in the succeeding Minute; if in the present, when he offers you his saving Mercy, you refuse it. Go then, Christians, and, ere *Good-Friday* comes; repent to-day and be in Readiness for it. This Day, this Instant, begin and give yourselves to God. This Instant is your own. One Moment of *Good-Friday* may not be so.





S E R M O N

ON

P A L M S U N D A Y.

St. MATTHEW xxi. 1, 7, 8, 9.

When JESUS and his Disciples drew nigh to Jerusalem; They brought an Ass with it's Colt; and laid their Garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great Multitude spread their Garments in the Way; and Others did cut Boughs from the Trees and strew'd them in the Way: And the Crouds which went before and which follow'd cried-out saying: HOSANNA TO THE SON OF DAVID.



WHAT Mortal, who was Witness to this triumphant Entry of *Jesus* into *Jerusalem*, could have imagin'd, Beloved Christians, but that his Persecutions were now at an End; that

that he had gain'd a final Victory over the
 Obduracy of the *Jews*; and that he would
 thenceforth forever reign as glorious in
 their Love, Obedience, and cordial Respect
 as He now did in their Acclamations, At-
 tendance and external Homage; that, in a
 word, He would be received into their
 Hearts with the same Joy as they honour'd
 him with in their Streets? Which of You,
 Beloved, had you been present at this
 mirthful Scene, would have expected to
 see it in less than six Days changed into
 that mournful One which began with his
 Passion? At hearing a joyous innumerable
 Populace, made-up of Men of every State,
 crying-out, with loud and chearful Huzzas,
 with one united Harmony of Voice, and
 with transporting Gladness on each Face
 and Feature, *Hosanna to the Son of David*;
 how would you not have scorn'd the Pro-
 phet who might have told You: " Mingle
 " not your Joy with this rude fickle Rabble:
 " 'Tis Mockery All. However serious They
 " seem and be at present, ere the Sun runs
 " six times It's Round, These Ruffians, who
 " now salute Your JESUS for their King,
 " shall impudently disown him; changing
 " their Note from *Hosanna to the Son of*
 " *David*, to *We have no other King than*
 " *Cæsar*. They, who now confess him the
 " *Blessed who came in the Name of the*
 " *Lord*, shall accuse him of being an Im-
 K k 2 " postor:

" postor: They, who now strip-off their
 " Garments to make them Carpets for him
 " to pass over in triumph, shall strip him of
 " his Garments to make their Cruelty
 " triumph over him: They, who now
 " carry Palms before him, shall soon pre-
 " pare an Ignominious Cross for him to
 " bear before themselves: They, who now
 " furnish him with Laurel, shall furnish
 " him with a Crown of Thorns: Now
 " they cry-out LONG LIVE; *Hosanna to*
 " *the Son of David*: But shortly they will
 " cry-out: *Crucify him*: Let him die!"

Ah Christians! How little would you not
 have credited such a Prophecy; and how
 much would you have despised the Pro-
 phet! And yet, Beloved, six Days would
 have convinced you that what seem'd so
 improbable, so almost impossible, was No-
 thing less than fatal Truth. Yes; too truly
 was this Fact foretold not to take Place,
 Too plainly was that perverse People warn'd
 of It, not to be self-condemn'd in per-
 petrating it. The same Prophets, who
 denounced to Them this triumphant Entry
 of JESUS to their City, *Say Ye to the*
Daughter of Sion: Behold thy King cometh
to Thee meek and sitting upon an Ass, and a
Colt the Fole of her who is used to the Yoke: *
 The very same caution'd them enough of
 their Inconstancy, to put them on their
 Guard against it. The Same fore-boded
 their

* *Isaiah*

lxii.

Zach. ix.

their indignantly postponing him to Thieves and Murderers: *With the Wicked, He was reputed.* * The Same fore-caution'd them, <sup>* *Isaiah*
liii</sup> that, unless they resisted their perverse Inclinations, they would put him at last to Death: *I will strike the Pastor and the Sheep of the Flock shall be dispersed.* † They <sup>† *Zach.*
xiii.</sup> foretold it: But ah! of what Benefit did it prove to warn this unsteady People? They foretold it; and ah! too truly did it not come to pass? O shocking Perversity! So then this Day, we are to celebrate the Triumph of our JESUS in *Jerusalem*. But how shall we celebrate it? With Joy or Mourning? With Smiles or Tears? With Transports of Alacrity or with Convulsions of Distress? What shall I say Christians? To-day it seems JESUS CHRIST is honour'd is homaged is received into *Jerusalem*, amidst the loudest Acclamations of Joy, by a numerous Multitude of People: To-day they flock about him, to proclaim him their King, their Messiah, their Deliverer sent from God: To-day they run after him, run beside him, run before him, to express, in the Eagerness of their Motions, the Earnestness of their Alacrity at his Coming: To-day they strew Leaves before him, strew Flowers before him, strew Carpets before him, and, to shew that they are ready to lay their All at his Feet, strip themselves of their very Garments to strew them

them before him: To-day, in a word, They divest the Palm of it's Foliage to ornament his Triumph, strip the Laurel to adorn his Brows with a Diadem, and hurry him to the Temple to anoint him their Monarch. Shall I rejoice then? Ah how can I? All this, I know, is his Due. But then what Pleasure can this just Tribute of Homage paid him give to me; when I consider how short a Time it will last? I too could leap for Joy to see Justice done to my Saviour once in his Life; did I not know that it is done by a fickle, faithless, false inconstant Generation, who, ere the Week be half elapsed, shall disgrace him as much as they have honour'd him; shall revile him more than they have homaged him; and change their Acclamations of Joy into opprobrious Invectives. Ah! When I consider in how few Days they shall treat him like an Usurper, like a Hypocrite, like an Impostor; throw Stones at him, Dirt at him, spit on him, buffet him, scourge him; strip him of his Cloaths, strip him of his Flesh; cover him with the Coat of a Fool, with a Robe of Ridicule; change his Palm into a Reed, his Laurel into a Crown of Thorns; and, after indignantly haling him from Tribunal to Tribunal through these very Streets he now rides along in Triumph, instead of saluting him as their true King of the
Lineage

Lineage of *David* with a *Hosanna to the Son of David*, postpone him to a Murderer and insult him with a barbarous Cry of *Crucify, Crucify him*; instead of giving a Loose to Joy, I lose all Patience. "But
" what is all this to the Purpose, You'll
" say? That horrid Scene is past and *JESUS*
" now secure, from all those Insults, in
" his eternal Glory. That Cruelty of
" *Jewish* Rage can no more be repeated;
" and therefore now we may renew with
" Joy the Celebration of our Saviour's
" Triumph. For, after all, what have we to
" do with the *Jews* and what They did?"
Ah! What indeed? Believe me, Dear-loved Auditors: 'Tis not about the *Jews*, that I am any-ways concern'd. I know, They were but Instruments to serve my Saviour's Purpose of redeeming me and You. I know, that He, who *fled into the Mountains himself alone*, when sought-for to be made King by Such as were sincere enough to have maintain'd their Loyalty to him inviolable: He would now also have fled, instead of entering *Jerusalem* triumphantly; had he not foreseen that This Triumph was to be the Introduction to his Passion, 'Tis not then the Treachery of the *Jews* which damps in me the Joy of this Victorious Day. No, no: It is the viler Perfidy of Christians. To see such Crouds of the Faithful flock to-day from every Part to Church,

to

to celebrate with Palms and Prayers the solemn Triumph of my JESUS: To see such Multitudes devoutly thronging to the Sanctuary to praise and sing his Praises with pious, public, loud *Hosannas*: To see them piously employ'd, not in idly throwing their Garments in his Way, but adorning the blest *Jerusalem* of their contrite Hearts with the rich Habits of Grace and fervent Charity, to give him a fit Reception in the Holy Eucharist: To see, *I say*, so many yield-up their Breasts to him a voluntary Conquest, and grace his victorious Entry with Cries of Love of Hope, and penitential Grief: O the extatic Pleasure! O how would my Soul be this Day ravish'd at the Reversion of the annual Scene; could I but cherish any solid Hopes of It's Duration! But when I reflect, how many of this fickle Croud of praying vowing penitent communicating Christians shall, just as they did last Year and many Years before, renew in their Excesses, before next *Friday* comes, all the indignant Outrages which JESUS suffer'd in his Passion; my Spirits sink, my Blood runs languid and I have no Heart to mingle in the Rejoicings of the Day. "And will this be the Case, *You'll say?*" Ah! And will it not, *I say?* Hitherto Every revolving Year has seen you on *Palm Sunday* devoutly triumphing with your Saviour, and has it not also seen you

you, ere the Week was half elapsed, repenting of your Compunction, and (to do Penance for the pious Deed) joining his Enemies, with fresh Ingratitude, to load that Saviour with outrageous Injuries? Ah! What Wrong then do I do you, in suspecting that your present *Paschal* Piety will not last? O Inconstancy! Shocking Inconstancy of Christians! Where shall I find Words to give a true Idea of It's Horror? O inconstant Christians! can you applaud yourselves for an ungrateful Levy, which you look down upon with so much Indignation and Contempt in the perfidious *Jews*: Whose Want of Steadiness was (notwithstanding) downright Constancy compared with yours? O! tremble rather, lest, outstripping them in Perfidy, you should surpass them also in the Punishment. Reflect, if you have never yet reflected, that INCONSTANCY IN GOOD is *One of the Evils We have most Cause to dread*:

- I. Because It is mingled in our very Nature with our general Corruption, and therefore requires our utmost Vigilance to expel it from our Souls; *and*
- II. Because It is the Chief Cause of Damnation to Christians, as It was of Ruin to the *Jews*.

" O God, Thou Fountain of invariable
 " Mercy! Look down upon these frail
 " these fickle Souls of ours, and fix them
 " with confirming Grace in the Pursuit
 " of Good. O! let them not, like unre-
 " sisting Rushes, waver and bend this Way
 " and That at the Discretion of every
 " Wind which blows: But make them,
 " like solid Rocks, immoveable amidst the
 " roughest Tempests of Temptation. And
 " since Thou has't mercifully made our
 " Hearts incapable of Rest till they repose
 " in Thee; so fill them with thy Grace
 " and Virtues; and so replenish them with
 " steady Faith, firm Hope, and growing
 " Charity and lasting Perseverance, as that
 " they may henceforward know no other
 " Change than That of being fill'd with
 " and absorb'd in thy unchanging Glory
 " and Beatitude."

I. It was not quite wrong in those Phi-
 losophers, who made Mutability or Incon-
 stancy enter as a constituent Part in the De-
 finition of the material World. For whe-
 ther we fix our Eyes to the sublunary
 Creation, or lift them to the Spheres; what
 Steadiness shall we find but in Inconstancy?
 The Earth, the Air, the Waters, with all
 Things in them are ever uncertain in their
 Motions. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars,
 with All the Planetary System, are ever
 varying

varying in their Places and their Course. And if for six-thousand Years the learned World has sought in vain the Subject of perpetual Motion; so might they go-on for other six-thousand Years (was the World likely to last so long) in Search of Something perpetually the Same, and be at-last as much to seek as ever. Yet this may be accounted for: All Matter is in it's Nature perishable; and therefore it is no Wonder, that, under the Controul of general Waste, It should incessantly corrupt and never keep one Sameness even in two neighbouring Instants. But that a Spiritual Being, by Nature incorruptible, unsubject to the Laws of Change and local Motion, should be unsteady! That Man's immortal Soul created to fix itself unalterably in it's unchangeable Creator, should, spite of Nature, be inconstant! O! This is a Prodigy which equally deserves our Wonder and our Grief. And yet, O Christians, so it is. So miserably are these noble Spirits, since *Adam's* Fall, plunged in the Mire of original Corruption, so strongly are they attach'd to, so thickly crusted-over with, the Concupiscences of the Flesh; that They, who were form'd like Seraphins to rest in God unchanged unchangeable, are now like crawling Insects clogg'd with Earth, and Slaves to all the inconstant Motions of their ever-changing Passions. Even

the Hearts of the Apostles were not Proof against Inconstancy. Tho', like unshaken Rocks, He pick'd them out to build on their Solidity the never-changing Structure of his Holy Church; how were they not, like weightless Feathers, tost by Every Puff of Trial? *Judas*, even *Judas* among the Rest, was chosen by Him to illuminate the World, like an unextinguishable Planet.

"Was not the very Traitor *Judas* spoken
 "to as well as Any of the rest of the
 "Apostles when JESUS told him: *Ye are*
 "the Light of the World. * And did not the
 "Devil put-out that Light, *says St. Ambrose?*"

•St. Matth
 v.

Yes, yes: He did, O Holy Father! Yes, yes: He did, O Christians! The Devil perverted *Judas*, that splendid Apostolic Light of Faith and Charity, that Advocate of Christ's Substitutes the Poor; and changed him to a smoaky Lightless Mass of Treachery against Christ's Sacred Person. But then what Devil was it, who wrought the horrid Change? Not *Beelzebub* had so much Part in it as He-himself: His own Inconstancy was his worst Devil. But this is no Wonder: He was the Son of Perdition; his Charity was Hypocrisy, his Hope was Avarice, his Faith Apostasy. What better then could be expected from that poisonous

†S. Matth
 vii.

Weed? *Do Men gather Grapes off Thorns. †*
 Not so St. *John*, the loved Disciple.
 He, all Fire of Seraphic Love for JESUS,
 could

could never rest without him ; could taste no Joy but with him, could not even relish the Bread of Angels, but reclined on JESU's Breast, to suck-in, with the heavenly Food of JESU's Body, the exstastic Wisdom of his sacred Truths. And yet (O unsteady Heart of Man!) no sooner Danger threatens his JESUS than *John* betakes himself to Flight ; and He, who seem'd before to quit almost his Flesh to cling to his beloved Master, now leaves behind him in the Hands of the *Jews* his Linnen Robe to flee from his all-loving Master left to the Discretion of a furious Rabble. The Constancy of *John* then, with all his Ardor and Sincerity of Love for Christ, was conquer'd by his Fears. But ah ! Who would have thought, by the Courage of a St. *Thomas*, that any Fear could shake his Faith ? While JESUS is in Safety, we hear not many Words from him : Content to give his dear-loved Saviour Proofs of his inviolable Attachment to his Sacred Person, in an unwearied zealous silent Watching of his blessed Will, he stifles all unnecessary Expressions of his Love for him ; not doubting but that JESUS knew his faithful Heart. But JESUS no sooner talks of Death than the Heroic *Thomas* intrepidly prepares to share with his honour'd Master as well in the Worst as in the Best of his Fate ; and generously cries-out, to animate his Brethren to the
same

* St. John
xi.

same Noble Resolution: *Let us also go and die with him.* * O generous happy Heroe!

† Cantic.
viii.

What then has't Thou henceforth to fear, for Whom even Death has lost It's Terrors? What can ere shake thy Faith so resolutely guarded by a Love which thus has proved itself *as strong as Death?* † But What, *did I say?* Alas! Inconstancy Thou has't still to fear: Still does their stick some earthly Mire to thy generous Soul. Still will That struggle to weigh thy noble Spirit down and shake It's Firmness: Still if Thou do'st not narrowly watch-over It's corrupt Propensity; It shall in earnest conquer that hitherto unconquerable Faith: And what the Fears of Death could not, Inconstancy of Life shall do. It was even so: *Thomas*, who fear'd not to die with his Lord while passible, fear'd to believe in his Lord when become impassible, till Jesus urged him to it with Conviction:

† St. John
xx.

Unless I see, I will not believe. ‡ O dire Inconstancy! What can'st Thou not subvert?

But what shall we say to a *St. Peter*, that main, that Fundamental Stone of Faith on which Christ built his Church? Who does not know, how firmly he profess'd his Lord to be the Son of God? In Recompence for which Christ previously enroll'd him in the List of Saints? *Blessed art Thou Simon Bar Jonah: Because Flesh and Blood has not reveal'd This to Thee.* || Ah!

|| S. Matth.
xvi.

What

What then, O Heaven-inspired Confessor, what can ere shake thy Sanctity henceforth, who, thus conversant with thy God, has't broken-off all Parley with the Flesh and has't been canoniz'd by Christ himself, by the Sovereign Lord of Saints? But what (*do I ask again?*) what Thou has't to Fear? Why --- thy own Flesh: Some Particles of that Flesh still closely cling to Thee: And whilst Thou has't yet Flesh about Thee, Thou has't still to Fear. The Laws of the Flesh are Fickleness and Change: These Laws within thy Members will be for ever struggling against the Laws of thy Mind, against thy Steadiness of Soul: And therefore if Thou keepest not a narrow Watch over them to subdue them; they will be Conquerors soon or late and render thee Inconstant. In fact, Beloved Christians, This zealous Apostle, who scorn'd, one time, to parley or deliberate with Flesh and Blood in the Confession of his Lord's Divinity, soon falls a Dupe to the Arguments of Flesh, and tries to divert the Saviour of the World from being Such, by aiming to dissuade him from his Cross and the Redemption of Mankind: *Far be This from Thee, Lord: This shall not be to Thee.* * Infomuch that our Redeemer * *Ibid.* thought himself under a Necessity of as publickly reproving him as he had before approved him; and, treating this Basis of his

*S. Matth.
xvi.

his Church as a Corner Stone of Scandal, chased him from his Presence with these indignant Words: *Get thee behind me,* Satan: *Thou art a Scandal to me.* * O fatal Fickleness of Man's corrupted Nature! O Dangerous Inconstancy! "See then, says the surprised St. Augustin, Behold, how the Souls of the Disciples fluctuated with Inconstancy; now firmly upright, now supinely fallen; one while all Light, another while all Darkness and Obscurity."

And is not this Inconstancy, Beloved Audience, by far more glaringly remarkable in us? One time all Fervor all Light all Spirit, how do we mount on Wings of Prayer, like Eagles to the very Heavens? Another-time how do we not, like Moles, all Languor all Blindness, all-over Flesh, sink in the Earth almost to Hell itself? To-day, perhaps our Hearts are firmly closed to Vice, as Pores of the impenetrable Adamant. And yet, perhaps, to-morrow, if not ere the Morrow comes, no Wax yields readier to the melting Sun than We shall to every the slenderest Temptation: While, in the mean time, the Grace and Christian Virtues, we were before possess of, serve but as ignoble Foot-stools for Guilt and Passion to mount the Throne of Tyranny and riot in Disorder.

"But where, *you'll say*, is the Wonder, that We poor Worldlings should be thus
"waving

“ wavering in Good, when even the exalted
“ Souls of Christ’s peculiar Favorites were
“ not exempt from feeling the same Effects
“ of human Imbecillity?” Ah! Wonder,
I own, there is no Room for Christians:
Rather is this a plain irrefragable Argument
of what I first advanced, that Inconstancy
is mingled with the Corruption of human
Nature in us All, and therefore is it One
of those Evils we ought the most to dread,
as One, which We stand in need of all our
Vigilance to escape. For If the noblest
finest Souls, those chosen Souls who were
singled-out to be Examples and Dispensers
of every Good to Us, were yet, for want
of a perpetual Vigilance and Fortitude, sur-
prised into it, by the still lurking Seeds of
Fleshly Frailty remaining in them; alas
what Cause of Confidence have We poor
sinful Creatures, crusted all-over with Flesh
and Fleshly Inclinations. Rather have not
We double Reason to stand awake forever
on our Guard, or, even sleeping, to rest upon
our Arms; and once we have embraced the
Good, to cling so closely to it, as that nor
Earth nor Aught of earthly may be able
to unlink us from it? That All Mankind
are Frail and wavering by Nature then is
not disputed: But then take this along
with you, that public common Frailty is
but a lame Excuse for private Fickle-
ness in Christians endow’d with Grace to

keep them steady. And tho', by the few Examples I have quoted, 'tis plain that the noblest holiest Souls, without incessant Watching, are liable to be betray'd by their intestin Weakness into Inconstancy in Good; yet are there many glorious Instances to be produced of Persons as frail by Nature as delicate of Composition, as the Weakest of us All, who have given illustrious Proofs, how unconquerably constant in Goodness unwearyed Vigilance can make the Heart of Man.

What if I should shew you an *Eleazar* a Man stricken in Age, reduced to the Dilemma of either losing his Constancy or losing his Life. Doubtless you will own that his Years, his Labours and Infirmities might not a little contribute to weaken his Mind and therefore to shake his Resolution in Sight of such a Trial. Yes, doubtless it would have done so but that his Vigilance was ever awake to support him. Compell'd therefore under Pain of the severest Tortures to eat of certain Meats forbidden by the Almighty's Laws, what does he resolve? Why---spite of all the Delicacy of his aged Frame, with more than youthful Vigour, He made the glorious Choice of Constancy, *and went*, says the sacred Historian, * *went voluntarily to the Punishment.* And considering how he ought to come patiently sustaining, he determin'd not to do unlawful Things for the Love of Life. O glorious

* 2 Macca.
vi.

glorious Vigilance! O noble Effect of serious Thought! *Eleazar* then with all his Delicacy, with all his Weaknesses of Flesh and Frailty of an Age decay'd, was arm'd by Vigilance for Victory and bravely gain'd it; *sustain'd* indeed *sore Pains of Body, but according to the Soul, suffer'd them willingly; and in this manner bravely departed this Life, leaving, not only to Young Men, but even to the whole Nation the Memory of his Death for an Example of Virtue and Fortitude.* * What if I should shew you seven * *Ibid.* *Jewish* Brethren successively tormented even to Death, in sight of One-another, for the Cause of Constancy, in a like Conjuncture: Or shew you their Heroic Mother sacrificing seven Lives in theirs, all dearer, all more precious, than her own, and finally concluding amidst the greatest Tortures the generous Sacrifice with her own Life; purely to cling inseparably to Good? There is then no Age, no Sex, no Tenderness of Frailty, but Grace improved by Vigilance may overcome. But why should I recur to *Jewish* Times for Instances of Fortitude and Vigilance, to Inculcate Christian Constancy to Christian Auditors? Why, Christians? Ah! It is to pique your Wariness. If *Jews* yet unredeem'd by the Death of *JESUS*, yet unfortified by his Blood, untaught by his Example, could by their Watchfulness attain to conquer Nature and maintain their Con-

310q M m 2 stancy

stancy in Good, unshaken amidst such fiery Trials; what Shame will it not be for You to plead your Frailty in excuse for your fantastical Unsteadiness on every slight Attack? Have then the Birth and Life and Sufferings, and Death and Doctrins, and Example of your Saviour render'd your Frailty greater than It was before? Or is not human Nature render'd now omnipotent in Him, who died to renew and strengthen it with his Grace? How else did a St. *Stephen*, like an impenetrable Rock, resist immoveable amidst a Shower of Stones in his Fidelity to Christ? The Stones indeed had force enough to break his Limbs, but still his Constancy remain'd invulnerable unshaken.

How else did'st Thou, O glorious Martyr, *Barlam*, with more than human Intrepidity, pull-down the Pride of Tyranny, Thyself unmoved? This dauntless Champion of JESUS CHRIST, dragg'd to the Altar of an Idol, is there commanded to offer Incense. "I offer Incense, *cries the generous Hera?*"
 "No, no: Thou art mistaken, Tyrant."
 "I am a Christian, and therefore rather
 "chuse to sacrifice my Flesh to JESUS than
 "Incense to thy Idols. And to convince
 "Thee that I am quite in earnest, see how
 "much readier this Hand can burn for
 "Christ than hold a Thuribule to Satan."
 This said, he bravely thrusts his sacred Hand into a Fire prepared for a more ignoble Purpose.

pose. There he persists in holding it and turns it often round amidst the Flames with the same Ease of Countenance as One would do who was but strewing Flowers. Already is the Skin burnt off by the Intensity of Heat; still he remains unmoved: The Flesh broils down in firey Drops; and still he with-draws it not; The Spasm quite penetrates to his very Marrow, through the parch'd Sinews, Nerves and Arteries, and Bones; and still he flinches not: But while the shrinking Standers-by, with Horror, turn their Eyes away from the painful Spectacle, He serenely looks at the consuming Victim; smiles on his Torture, and enjoys the Smart. But yet that He may not altogether seem a lifeless Statue, big Tears of Anguish trickle down his Cheeks betray the Accuteness of his Pains and leave his Torturers convinced, that it is not Insensibility of Body but Constancy of Soul which renders him thus immoveable. Ah! his Flesh is but too sensible of the rude Anguish and would readily draw-back, but that his Spirit bids it not. "Enough, enough," *his languid Sense cries out.* "There is not yet enough endured for Christ," *replies his vigorous Spirit.* "No more, no more: For Pity's Sake no more," *the Fainting Flesh cries out.* "Tis a Mistake," *cries Constancy:* "Much more is possible; much more is tolerable, for Christ: I can all Things
which
" in

* *Philipp.*
xiv.

" *in him who comforts me.*" * replies the
generous Hero. Nor does he draw his
precious Hand from amidst the burning
Coals till he sees the very Bones quite
stript of every Particle of Flesh. " O Hand
" of Constancy, *says great St. Basil*, un-
" taught by Fire to yield ! O feeble Fire
" thus taught by Flesh to be overcome !
" What shall I call thee, noble Soldier ?
" An invulnerable Statue ? No : Thy For-
" titude surpasses the robustest Adamant a
" Statue can be form'd of. Shall I com-
" pare Thee then to Steel ? Ah ! No : The
" faint Similitude is far beneath thy Con-
" stancy, whom Fire could consume but
" not subdue." O sacred Hero, *let me*
subjoin ! O sacred Hero ! Destin'd to sign
the Condemnation of inconstant Souls !
What Coals of Fire will not thy Firm-
ness fling in the Face of those unsteady
Christians, whose Virtue yields to every little
Spark of Concupiscence ? What an im-
mortal Instance of Reproach wil't not Thou
prove to the fickle Christians of this Age, who,
bent by every trivial Trial, abandon Christ,
forsake their Virtue, give-up Grace and
offer Incense to every Idol of their Passions
and Caprices ; and after all, expect to stand
excused by pleading the common Frailty
of Human Nature.

Go then, O Christians ! Be constant in
Nothing but Inconstancy : And see at Last
whether

whether the Frailty of the Flesh by Nature prone to Change will be admitted as a legitimate Excuse for your Unsteadiness in Good. See whether even your own past Constancy in Evil will not rather rise in Judgment against You. Man then can, in spite of all this Volubility of Nature, be firm in Evil? Ah! Yes, yes: He can. Too evidently we have seen He can; of This we have had innumerable Proofs: Innumerable Instances of Men who have endured the greatest Hardships, encounter'd the most dread Dangers and borne the most cruel Tortures rather than shrink at Vices once embraced: And we may truly say, that, if Christ has had many Martyrs, the Devil has probably had Many more. O Horror! Shall Man have Steadiness enough to dare the rudest Trials inflexible in Vice, and yet plead Fickleness of Nature as an Excuse for yielding-up his Virtue to the feeble Force of every paltry Temptation? Upon this Subject we are obliged to *Plutarch*, for a very moral tho' melancholy Reflection, which I'll relate if you will pardon me the giving you, who are Christians, a Lesson out of an instructive *Heathen*. But pardon me, *did I say?* Why should you not? It is not I who affront you: But You affront yourselves, if you don't practice better than mere *Heathens* think. To return then; "When AGE-

"SILAUS

"SILAUS, *says this Author*, had beheld
 "a certain flagitious Criminal, whom he
 "had caused to be put to the Torture,
 "persist in his Perversity with superlative
 "Constancy amidst the accutest Anguish,
 "and bear every Torment with magnani-
 "mous Steadiness; he could not forbear
 "crying-out with painful Surprise: *O what*
 "*a Wretch is Man, to place such Constancy*
 "*in what is base and wicked!* It grieved
 "the illustrious Chief to see such Strength
 "of Mind and Steadiness of Nature lost
 "in Wickedness, which, if directed rightly,
 "might have proved of sovereign Service
 "to the Common-Wealth." Ah Christians!
 There is then a Strength, a Steadiness in
 Nature, however weak we find it? Yes
 Nature is not so feeble or so fickle, but
 We can steadily persist in Evil: And there-
 fore would we but exert our Vigilance; We
 might apply that Strength and Firmness
 to the keeping us as immoveable in Good.
 What Wretches then, O Christians, must
 not we be if we compel not Nature, frail
 and wavering as it is, to be as vigorous and
 firm in Virtue as it is capable of being in
 Vice?

I own indeed, that our corrupted Nature
 is much more prone to Evil than to Good.
 And therefore it must require abundantly
 more careful Watching to fix it steadily to
 Good than would be necessary to make it
 firm

firm to Evil. But if unwearied Watching will effect it; must not Inconstancy in Good be an unpardonable Crime? I own, the Christians are but Few, who keep their Virtue on this perpetual Guard: And therefore is it that the Frailty of their wavering Nature has shaken, nay defeated the Constancy of so Many of them hitherto. But Some, You see, as frail, as weak, as naturally prone to Sin, as the most feeble of you All, have kept so faithful a Look-out as to be Proof against Inconstancy, amidst the most staggering Temptations: And so may All. But what, if All had been Inconstant? What tho' the Apostles were unsteady; what tho' we could not furnish one plain Instance of heroic Constancy in Good; would That be any Plea for You hereafter to relinquish the virtuous State You have now embraced? No, Christians, no. Our common Frailty is no Excuse for our private Sins. Believe me: Our Frailty, our Unsteadiness is no Excuse for our Neglect of cultivating with assiduous Care those Graces which are offer'd us to make us strong and steady. If Frailty could excuse us; why should that God, who is so tender of us, bear such avenging Hatred to every Fall of these poor miserable Vessels of frail Earth? He wanted not *Job* to remind him, *Remember, that, like Clay, Thou did'st make me.* * He knows * *Job x.* full-well how frail our Vessels are by Na-

ture: But then he knows likewise how strong he has put it in our Power, by Grace, to make Them. And therefore when they are broken, he knows that is not their Frailty's Fault but our Perversity's. And therefore too, when they are broken, he rejects them; and gives them up to *Satan* to resist them for his hideous Use in the eternal Flames. " Away, *says the Almighty*,
 " away with these frail Vessels, which
 " break at every Touch, tho' made by
 " Grace so strong. Let them be ever banish'd from my Presence, nor ever be
 " admitted to the Altar of my Glory. Let
 " me no more behold these fickle Creatures,
 " who cost me so much Blood to comfort
 " with my Grace and render firm to me.
 " To-day devout; to-morrow perhaps scandalous: To-day all Chastity; to-morrow
 " all Uncleanneſs: This Week at Church;
 " the next perhaps in some unhallow'd
 " Stew: This Week so fervent in their
 " Vows that their pious Bosoms are so many
 " Vessels of fragrant Aromatics; the Next
 " so tepid, so indifferent, so faithless to
 " their Purposes, that their Hearts seem so
 " many Sewers of exhaling Filth: This
 " *Easter-Time* so careful of their Words,
 " that every Breath they utter ascends to
 " me like Incense; but after *Easter* so
 " abandon'd to Lies, to Perjuries to Flattery, to Calumny and Leudness, that their
 " Mouths

“ Mouths scent far more odious than a Pest-
 “ ground newly open’d. Away, away with
 “ such unsteady Vessels from my Presence:
 “ Away with them to the Infernal Flames,
 “ where they are fitter to be burnt, than
 “ to adorn the Temple of my Glory.” O
 Vessels of Reprobation! O inconstant Souls!
 O that One of you was but by to hear
 me, that I might try to save you from that
 unconsuming Furnace! How should I not
 rejoice? O wavering Souls! O Souls unfaith-
 ful to your Sovereign, to your gracious Spouse,
 and to your God! What can you propose to
 reap from these Virtuous Beginnings with-
 out an End alike? What from this Semi-
 Goodness half unfinish’d? What from this
 Race begun; unless you reach the Goal?
 What, in a word, from all the Grace and
 Lights you now possess; if once you barter
 them for Inconstancy? Ah! What can you
 reap but Reprobation, eternal Reprobation?
 For *He only, who shall persevere to the*
End, will be saved: So true is that impor-
 tant Remark of St. Jerom: “ ’Tis not the
 “ Beginning of Christians but their End
 “ which is inquired into. St. Paul began
 “ amiss; but ended happily: Whereas
 “ Judas began laudably, but merited
 “ Damnation by his End.” O Christians!
 Be steady in your Perseverance to the End;
 or your present virtuous Beginnings will be
 utterly fruitless. And if you were made
 ! no more

strong enough to begin; what room have you to doubt but, He who gave you that Strength, if you are watchful to improve it, will make you steady to the End? "Our 'Flesh is Frail, *you still cry-out*; and our "very Nature is mingled with Inconstancy." The greater Evil then, *I say*, is Inconstancy and so much the more to be dreaded for it's being an Intestine Traitor lurking within us. Surely then the more you have to fear from it, the more Cause have you to be forever on your Guard against it, and the less will you be capable of Excuse or Pity, if you do not redouble your Vigilance to conquer it.

II. But Inconstancy is not only to be dreaded as a lurking Enemy within us holding Correspondence with our Corruption. It is also to be dreaded as an Incendiary of Enmity between God and Us. It caused the Almighty to abandon his favorite People the *Jews* and to devote them to Ruin; and is capable, if we are conquer'd by it, of banishing us forever from his enlivening Presence and plunging us into irrevocable Perdition. Who, to hear the pious Acclamations of the *Jews* in the solemn Triumph of JESUS on this sacred Day, would not be disposed, with Holy Zeal, to envy their Fervor? *Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord*, they cry. What Devotion!

votion! What Attachment to the sacred Person of Christ could inspire a more affectionate Salutation. But! Wait a few Days; how horrid a Note shall not this change to? *Crucify, crucify him*; they cry. Heavens! What! *crucify the Blessed, who comes in the Name of the Lord*? O Blasphemous Project! No Matter; *Crucify him: Let him be crucified*, is to be the popular Cry. O the horrid Fickleness of this stiff-neck'd People! Shockt at such strange unparallel'd Inconstancy, a Holy Father astonish'd cries: "What then shall this persecuted Person do to you? What new Thing shall happen, that the Voice of Blessing and Praises should be so soon, so suddenly reversed to shrieks of Blasphemy and Spleen?" Ah! What indeed can be the Subject of your Quarrel with him, O senseless Waverers? To-day, all Fervor; You are eager to embalm his very Name to Immortality with your Encomiums. And for what Reason will you then, in a few Days, vomit from your Mouths the Poison of your Blasphemies against him to destroy him? Why must You even, like Basilisks, level at him rank deadly Venom from your murderous Looks? But why did I ask? Were not these Murderers of Christ the lineal Race of those ungovernable *Jews* whom *Moses* headed in the Wilderness? It is Nothing, new then to see this People either
ungrateful

ungrateful or inconstant; whose Loyalty and Faith consisted ever in scarce remaining one whole Week in perfect Love Subjection and Fealty with God. " This, this *says the Father*, is the true antiquated Malice of " that People." Why, think You, does the Almighty now keep the wretched Nation of *Jews* exiled from his Holy Church, repudiated from Christian Altars, but because They have ever proved themselves fickle Vessels unfit for his Service?

If You are not convinced of This, look-back and believe your own Eyes: Behold them but in the *Red-Sea*, where the weaker Elements subsiding to make their Fortitude a free Passage, the unsteady Waters harden into the firmest Walls to serve at once for Bulwarks to their Safety and Emblems of their Constancy: How joyfully, how thankfully, how intrepidly do they not steer their new-form'd Course amidst the embattled Waves, and charm the foaming Surges to eccho to their fervent Songs of Praise and Benediction of the God of Hosts, singing with rapturous Melody like That of DAVID:

* *Psal.*
xcii.

* *The Rivers, O Lord, have lifted up their Waves above the Voices of many Waters. The Surges of the Sea are marvelous: Marvelous is our Lord on high. . . Holiness becometh thy House, O Lord, for Length of Days. O what Vessels of Steadiness! O what devout, what fervorous Vessels of faithful*

faithful Constancy, thus prepared to persevere to an endless Length of Days! But hold, there is no trusting to the hollow Sounds of such frail, such crazy fickle Vessels. Scarce are they safely encamp'd, in the Wilderness, than they begin to break into Inconstancy, and murmur with base Ingratitude against their Deliverer. A little Scarcity of Food assails them and their needs no more to make them lose all Respect for *Moses*, all Confidence in God's future Providence, all Gratitude for his past Mercies: "Ah! What Fools were not we,
 " *They cry*, to leave the Land of *Egypt*,
 " the Land of Plenty for this barren Desert? *Would to God, we had died by the*
 " *Hand of our Lord in the Land of Egypt*
 " *when we sat over the Flesh-pots, and did*
 " *eat Bread to our Fill! Why have you*
 " *brought us into this Desert, that You*
 " *might kill all the Multitude with Fa-*
 " *mine? ** Can God, think you, prepare ^{* *Exodus*}
 " *a Table in the Desert.* † In *Egypt*, it ^{xvi.}
 " is true, we lived a Life of Slaves: ^{† *Psalms.*}
 " But what was That to our present ^{lxxvii.}
 " Misery, reduced as we are likely to
 " be through Hunger to die the Death of
 " Beasts?" What can be said to such Ingratitude? God nevertheless to conquer their Perversity with Goodness converts the Heavens into a Store-House of Provisions, makes Plenty descend to them in a Shower
 of

of *Manna*, and stops their Mouths to Murmuration by filling them to Satiety with heavenly Nourriture. In short, *They eat and had their Fill*. Just for a Spurt indeed, while yet the Food is in their Mouths, this Miracle of Providence revives their Faith and reinflames their Fervor. But ah! How long does Either last? Even till a fresh Occasion calls on them for Steadiness. Ah! hear how a little Penury of Water tries these tender Vessels again and makes them eccho Nought but ungrateful Reproaches against their Leader and against their God. "Alas
 " what is dry Meat without refreshing
 " Draughts to cool and moisten our parch'd-
 " up Entrails? Supplying us with Viands
 " without the least Supply of Drink is only
 " making our Pain more lingering to make
 " us doubly feel the Death of perishing
 " through Thirst: Why, why then did'st
 " Thou O *Moses* give Ear to the Almighty's
 " Invitation of Us to the Land of *Promise*?
 " *Why did'st Thou make us go-forth from*
 " *Egypt to kill us and our Children, and our*
 " *Beasts with Thirst?*" * O volatil Race of
 faithless People! And cannot the same God,
 who harden'd the Floods of the Sea into a
 solid Rock for thy Deliverance and Safety,
 force also Rivers from a Barren Flint? What
 then is thy Confidence in God; that a little
 sudden Thirst is thus capable of making
 thee utterly forget the immense Sea of God's
 ever-

* *Exodus*
 xxvii.

ever-flowing Mercy and Liberality to Thee. But why do I ask? It is the Nature of this Inconstant Generation; and the best Excuse which could ever yet be made for them is That of St. *Laurence Justinian*, who pleads their habitual Perversity as the Cause of their several Acts of Inconstancy to GOD from Time to Time. "Such, such is the true antiquated Malice of this People," to receive Favours from GOD, to thank him, to make him Promises, and then to forget his Favours and rebel against him. But after all these Benefits surely GOD may expect a little more Fidelity and Gratitude from this People than he has yet met with? Surely, O head-strong *Israelites*, You will be forced at last to yield? What can you wish for more? He has furnish'd you with Drink at the Expence of a Miracle, to change your Thirst of Water into an unquenchable Thirst after the Living Fountain of his Love. He fed you and satiated you before, with Bread handed down to you from Heaven; that, craving no more the perishable Substance of the Earth, you might learn to hunger chiefly, nay wholly, after the Bread of everlasting Life. In short, to purchase your Love, he has condescended to supply every the meanest Office, that You might suffer Nothing, want Nothing, which You could wish for from him. Surely then, O favour'd Nation, You can resist no longer

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such overflowing Liberality? Surely, tho' God should hereafter reduce you to every Want; try you with every Distress; you could not forbear to love him? --- No; It may be, not: It may be, that, just while you are full, you will remember to be Grateful. But afterwards? O! Afterwards the Cry is:

" *Who shall give us Flesh to eat: Our*
 " *Soul is dry; our Eyes behold Nothing else*
 " *but this Manna.* * O what Loathing,
 " what Nauseating, what Revolutions of
 " Stomach! Always *Manna*? Always a
 " little insipid Cake? O savoury Melons and
 " Onions of *Egypt*! O the cherishing Meals
 " of Flesh we were fatten'd and regaled
 " with there! Ah! Why did we leave
 " that abounding Land, to be surfeited with
 " tasteless *Manna* in a Wilderness? *Who*
 " *will give us Flesh to eat in the Desert?*" †

Such, such, Beloved Christians, were the Returns the Almighty met with from the Children of *Israel* for all his Mercies to them. Such their Gratitude and Constancy to their Divine Benefactor. But ah! This had been supportable, if This was All. But This was the least Effect of their Unsteadiness. This, in a word, was Piety, compared with the rest of their Conduct: Not content with Murmurations against God, not satisfied with Complaints of his Providence deceiving them, They proceed to the blasphemous Arraignment of his Deity; set-up a strange

GOD

* Numb.
x.

† Ibid.

GOD in competition with him ; cause a molten Calf of Gold to be erected for their GOD ; publicly and solemnly renounce their Allegiance to their Maker ; and turn their Homages and Adorations to the Idol of their own working. O how the Desert rings with their impious loud Huzzas ! No more is their Song : *Marvelous is our Lord on high.* No, no : It is now : “ Long live our Golden “ GOD, Long live the molten Calf, which “ (ere It had a Being) free’d us from the “ *Egyptian Tyrant Pharaoh’s slavish Laws.* “ Long live the golden Earlets which have “ form’d us such a GOD to adore : *These, “ these are thy Gods, O Israel, who have “ brought Thee out of the Land of Egypt.**”

* Exodus
xxxii.

O flagitious Nation ! O Rebel Generation, more inconstant than the Moon, more fickle than the Air, more volatil than Smoke, more instable than the Waves ! Away with This infamous Nation from the Presence of GOD ; Out with it from the Pale of Christ’s Church ; Far with it from his Temples, from his Altars. “ Yes, yes, *says the Lord,* away “ with these Fickle, Frail, Unsteady “ Vessels of Putrefaction : Away with “ them from my Presence forever, to be “ forever Vessels of Perdition. But first let “ them roam mere Vagabonds on Earth, “ proscribed, like *Cain* ; and left, like Out- “ laws, without Kingdom ; without Laws ; “ with Temples ; without Sacrifices ; with-

“ out Priesthood, Power or Honour. And
 “ since they needs would live without me
 “ their Sovereign; let them ever be the
 “ Scorn of Men and the Scoff of Devils.”

But why, my God, why must this whole Nation be proscribed for the Malice of their Fore-Fathers? “ That indeed was the antiquated Malice of this People’s first Progenitors.” But have not their Posterity amply wiped-off, this Day, with loud *Hozannas*, the guilty Stain of their Fore-Fathers? Ah No! Wait but a few Days; and the harsh Cries of *crucify him crucify him* will soon convince you; that the antiquated Malice of this People’s Ancestors, is still alive in their Posterity. Still, still did they persist in their Inconstancy to the last; and therefore just was it, that God should no longer persist in shewing them Mercy: Time was it that he should put an End to his long Suffering, change his Patience exasperated into Fury, and abandon them to the ruinous Consequences of their contumacious Unsteadiness. O faithless Nation! O fatal Dupe of Inconstancy! O Had’st Thou but known, even in This thy Day, the Things which would be of Peace to Thee! But now they are

• St. Luke *hidden from thy Eyes.* * And alas all this
 xix. Day’s glorious Works will be destroy’d by the perverse Unsteadiness of Some Days

† *Ibid.* hence. Wherefore † the Days shall come upon Thee: And thy Enemies shall compass Thee

Thee with a Trench, and block Thee up all round, and straiten Thee on every Side; and beat Thee flat to the Ground and thy Children which are in Thee; and they shall not leave in Thee a Stone upon a Stone, because thou has't not known the Time of thy Visitation. O wretched, wretched, wretched People! How dear a Price has not your Inconstancy cost you?

But while alas I am speaking, an inward Check, the gracious Impulse of inspiring Truth, calls-back my ill-address'd Reproaches; and bids me no longer lavish on the *Jews* these Sighs and Lamentations; while Christians in general, and Some of Us (it may be) in this very Audience, stand in Need of all the Tears we have to spare, to weep at-home, and water with incessant Grief our own past Fickleness. The *Jews* were Inconstant, it is true, shamefully Inconstant. But are We Christians a jot more firm in our Fidelity to Christ? The Good Purposes made in former Confessions, how soon have they not been broken? The virtuous Resolutions taken, this very Day, of giving ourselves to God intirely, how shortly will they be remember'd by us, only to be the more perversely violated? That Fervor in the Praises of God (which has been, this Day, kindled in the Hearts of Some of us; I hope, by the Graciousness of JESUS in coming into them in the Holy Eucharist

we

we received) how soon will it not be most shamefully extinguish'd, by a Renewal of our disorderly Inconstancy? You, O Young Men, happily convinced of the Dangers which your Unsteadiness has made you subject to, have at this sacred Time perhaps renew'd your baptismal Vows and given yourselves up to God with Fervor and Sincerity. But ah! A few Days hence, what will become of all your present Warmth and Candour? What will be the Fruit of so many Holy Thoughts which God has infused into you by evangelic Sermons, by devout Lectures, by spiritual Conversations and edifying Examples? You, O Young Men, *I say*, touch'd with a lively sense of your past Follies, are (this Day) resolved to give-up to God the Remainder of that Life which you have so early dedicated to the World? But ah! who will assure me that this Day's Compunction, like That of this Day twelve-months ago, shall not be render'd fruitless by a Relapse more vicious than your former State, within the narrow Space of a few Days-Time? You, O Young Women, re-inflamed with pious Ardor by the Revival of that unbred Devotion, which Gracious Heaven seems to have mingled in the Composition of your female Hearts; You, *I say*, are now resolved to cling, with *Mary*, to the Cross of Christ and chuse the better Part, the Part of Love. But ah! Will not the
approaching

approaching *Easter* see you re-assume all your little Vanities and Dissipations; if You do not, even ere *Good-Friday* comes, enter again in League with all your *Airs* and *Artifices* to tempt and bribe some fickle *Judas* to betray your Lord with Crimes excited by your Levity of Conduct? You, O Ecclesiastics, fired with that Fervor which this sacred Season inspires, even like Cherubims in the Holy of Holies, infuse nay force Devotion into the Hearts of all the People with your exemplary Deportment at God's Altars: But ah! What will It avail, if, a few Days elapsed, forgetful of your Dignity, you should approach those very Altars with a Levity unseemly even in the Laity? You, O Gentry, are actually all Zeal, all Eagerness to ransom your Offences with Prayer, and Fasts, and Almsdeeds. Ah! Have a Care You be not soon as eager to repeat those Offences, with spiritual Sloth, with Luxury, with Injustices? O Poor! O Sick! O Friendless! How humble are not You at present? How Penitent? How ready to receive the Comforts of your Lord? But will you always be thus ready? Ah! How probably will not a little Prosperity, a little Health, a little human Respect, soon make you as haughty as ever; as disorderly as ever; as indifferent as ever to the Things which truly pertain to your Peace? O would to God I had less Ground
for

for all my Fears of your Inconstancy, Dear Christians, than I really have. But alas when I consider the Scandals given, within this one last Year by many Christians, who, but a Year ago, were lovely Patterns of a Christian Life: When I consider the Wealth which within this Year has been lavish'd in Gaming, in Luxury, in Debaucheries, in tempting to seduce unguarded Innocence; and lavish'd by Christians, by Catholics, by Those very Persons, who, but last *Lent*, seem'd resolutely bent on devoting their Superfluities to the instructing the Ignorant, to the feeding the Hungry and relieving the Neccessitous; to the adorning God's Altars and encouraging his Hospitals, to the placing Innocence out of Danger and dragging Sinners out of Perdition: When, *I say*, I think on all This; how can I forbear to tremble, Christians, lest You should prove as Inconstant this Year as the Last; lest, for want of more Steadiness than has been hitherto made use of, Penitents should lose their present Grace, and lose it forever; lest the Church should lose it's new-born Children, God be robb'd of his Glory, and the Devil be released from his Confusion? The *Jews*, Beloved Auditors, appear to You inexcusably flagitious in their Inconstancy. And with good Reason indeed, for They are so. But ah! How much more, and more inexcusably, flagitious must not those Christians be, who, indulged

indulged by the Almighty infinitely more than the *Jews*, are still more unfaithful to him, and more unsteady in his Service? If the Children of *Israel* forsook their Creator to pay their Homages to a golden Calf; How many Children of Christ abandon their Redeemer to Idolize the Objects of their Avarice? If the *Hebrews* rebell'd against God to glut themselves with the Flesh-pots of *Egypt*; how often do not Christians revolt against him to immerge themselves in every vicious Delight of Carnality? The *Jews* murmur'd against God and his Minister *Moses*: And so do Christians. Forever are they busied in murmuring, back-biting, flandering, censuring, calumniating, defaming, or ridiculing his Servants their Neighbours. On every slight Occasion are they practising the Like against his Ministers their Lawful Pastors, notwithstanding his terrible Menace by the Mouth of his Prophet: * *The Face of our Lord hath divided them: He will not add to respect them; because they have not revered the Faces of the Priests, neither had they Pity on the Ancients.* Nay God himself is not exempt from their Irreverences. Every little Delay of his to gratify them, every little Disappointment which for their Good he graciously sends them, is a sufficient matter to make them murmur at his Disposal, arraign his Providence, repine at his Government,

* *Jerem.
Lament. iv.*

with themselves Dead to be released from it, and cry-out with the ungrateful *Jews*: *Would we had died by the Hand of our Lord, while we sat over the Flesh-pots of Luxury and did eat the Bread of Prosperity to our Fill*: Nay it is more than enough oftentimes to make them throw-off their Dependence on him even to worship the foreign Gods of the Earth and the Flesh. Ah! Let us then no longer exert our Indignation against the *Jews*, which may with so much greater Reason be levell'd at ourselves. "This was indeed the antiquated Malice of that People." But now alas the impious Synagogue stands countenanced by the more heinous Impiety of Christians, and We have Cause with bleeding Hearts to own, that *Such is the modern Malice of this more favour'd People.*

O Christians then! Inconstant Fickle Christians! If this be sadly true, why should false Tenderness be so cruel to conceal it? If you are like to prove again inconstant like the *Jews*; why may I not, without Offence, warn You, that You will perish with them? Yes, Beloved: If after so many merciful Reconciliations which your God has granted to you; if after so many perverse Relapses, you stumble again with the *Jews*; you will probably fall with the *Jews* into irreparable Ruin: And the terrifying Sentence of *JESUS* upon

upon Them, shall be spiritually verified in
 You: O *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who killest
 the Prophets and stonest Them who were sent
 to Thee! How often would I have gather'd
 together thy Children, as the Hen do'th gather
 together her Chickens under her Wings; and
 Thou would'st not. Behold your House shall
 be left desert to you.* " O faithless City!
 " O faithless Christian Metropolis, which
 " persecutest thy lawful Pastors and stonest
 " with Hatred and Calumny Those who
 " are lawfully sent to thee by Me and my
 " Church, to lead Thee back to me! What
 " Miracles have I not wrought to convince
 " Thee of thy Errors? What Mercies have
 " I not exerted to convert thee to Truth
 " and Good? *And Thou would'st not. O*
 " Faith-professing Flock of mine! How
 " often have not I, with fresh repeated
 " Graces, Lights and Sacraments and sacred
 " Means, tenderly endeavour'd to gather you
 " together from the general Contagion, just
 " *as the Hen gathers together her Chickens*
 " *under her Wings; and Thou would'st not.*
 " Wherefore *behold your House shall be left*
 " *desert to you: And in Punishment of*
 " your perverse Inconstancy, O fickle Chri-
 " stians, behold Your Hearts shall hence-
 " forth remain, like barren Heaths; void of
 " Mercy, Grace and Glory; the abandon'd
 " waste of Sin; the Seat of everlasting
 " Horror."

Little will it avail to plead the Frailty of your Nature mingled (as it was) with inbred Fickleness. Prone as your Nature of itself may be to Levity, that Levity has been sufficiently fix'd and render'd firm by the precious Blood of him, who gave even to the fickle Winds their Weight. "God, *says St. Gregory*, has given sufficient Gravity "to our Souls to preserve them against "being hurried away from the Almighty's "gracious Purposes, by their natural Levity." What tho' our Hearts, like giddy Cock-boats, are liable, when left to themselves, to the being tost and re-tost by every tempestuous Hurricane of our Passions; is it not our own Fault that these Vessels, frail as they there, are so unsteady, so often overset? If you are not resolved on perishing, *says St. Bernard*, you need not perish. Since God is ever graciously prepared to pilot you himself to everlasting Safety. "The Word of God will direct you, and "the Spirit of God is ready to bear you "steady to the Harbour of Salvation." But the Mischief is, that You snatch the Helm out of the Almighty's Hands to give it up to Caprice: And, instead of eagerly and steadily steering your Course towards Heaven, you are courting the flattering Gales of Sensual Pleasures, casting Anchor amidst the most trifling Amusements, and, fishing for the most empty Impertinencies. Thus do

do you foolishly lose your Time, and split at last on the Rock of Temporal Enjoyments. It is not then so much the Fault of your Frailty which makes you thus faithless, thus Inconstant in Good, as it is your perverse Neglect of Vigilance. You are frail by Nature? You are of a Composition mingled with Inconstancy? And were not a St. *Stephen*, a St. *Barlam*, as fickle by Nature as Any of You all? Yet Flint could not conquer the Firmness of the Former, nor Fire subdue the Constancy of the Latter. And why may not You be as constant as They were, You; who have all the Helps They had? But how should you, while You neglect to watch, as they did, over your native Frailty? How shall those Christians ever bear the rude Assaults, which These great Saints so easily repell'd, who are not sufficiently on their Guard to bear the most trifling Provocations? How shall the Hand give-up it's Flesh to Flames, it's Body to a Volley of Stones, for Christ, which cannot give an Alms to his Poor, cannot give Pardon to an offending Neighbour? How shall that Hand strip itself of it's own Flesh for Christ, which is too lascivious to abstain from the Flesh of Others?

Let us place before the Eyes of our Understanding, Beloved, all the Flames of various Vices which have too often separated us from Christ, and see whether

ther they were so intense, so terrifying to resist, as those which his glorious Martyrs have constantly not only resisted but overcome. Ah! Have We been, like a *St. Stephen*, like a *St. Bartholomew*, like a *St. Barlam*, surrounded with Executioners, fled alive by Butchers, tortured with Flames, threaten'd a thousand Deaths by Tyrants? No, no: The trivial Spark of a leud Look, of a wanton Suggestion, of a lascivious Message, has fired our Souls almost to Ashes, and dragg'd us from the Bosom of Christ to the Jaws of *Satan*. The almost imperceptible Spark of an unwary Word, of an Affront, of an ill-grounded Jealousy, has arm'd the Hands of Christians with Sword and Pistol, has fill'd their Mouths with Reproaches and Calumny, and loaded their Hearts with the Venom of Rancour Hatred and Thirst of Revenge. By what then, Christians, do you know that your Nature is so weak as you imagin it? What Crosses have you courted, to exercise your Constancy? What Invitations have you rejected, rather than descend from, rather than not cling to, the little Crosses sent you for a Tryal of your Constancy? Have You, with a *St. Andrew*, been, Each, much more afraid of losing than of clinging to your Cross?

But why do I stop at Rivulets, when in Sight of the Fountain-Head of Constancy? O my ever dear Redeemer! How much
more

more cruel and grievous was not thy Cross than any We can ere be subject to? Yet did'st Thou never flinch from it. Ah! What a rude Temptation was not made use of to shake thy Constancy, when dying on it for Mankind in general in quality of universal Saviour of Mankind? "*If thou ar't the Son of God, the impious Jews cry-out; descend from the Cross and we will believe in Thee.* If Thou really ar't so zealous to save us as Thou pretendest; come down from that Cross, and we are ready to acknowledge Thee for our *Messiah.*" But ah Dear Lover and Example of firm and faithful Souls! Did'st Thou suffer thyself to be decoy'd from thy beloved Cross by such ensnaring Arguments? Did'st Thou screen thyself from Shame and Reproach, regardless of our Wants? Did'st Thou perchance over-look the Love of us, to avoid the imputation of Imposture? "No, no, *replied thy tender Love: I am wedded to this Cross, to save my dear-loved Souls; and while one single Drop of Blood remains, within these Veins, while this Life has the least Power left to breathe; suffer I must, agonize I must and will upon this Gibet.*" But You will be blasphemed. "No Matter." But They will not own you for their God. "Be it so: My beloved Elect must and shall be redeem'd. Let the whole Price
" be

"be paid for my Friends; and let what
 "will befall my Reputation, Interests and
 "Life. I am ready at the Price of every
 "Pain to purchase the Love of those Souls,
 "who, after my Example, will be so
 "nail'd in their Affections to the Cross,
 "that Nothing can make them descend
 "from it." And what kind of Blessed
 Souls are Those, Dear Jesus? Not surely
 the Souls of Christians? Alas, I fear not.
 Will Nothing make them descend from the
 Cross they have once embraced? Mark but
 the First among them You set Eyes on.
 He receives an Affront: But mindful that
 he is the Disciple of a crucified Lord, a
 Christian, He resolves to cling to his Cross
 and forgive; when the Devil, who seldom
 acts in person because never at a loss for
 Lawyers to act for him, sets his Agents to
 work: Accordingly they closely press our
 half-resolved Disciple of Christ with the old
 Arguments of their old Master. "Alas
 "what are you about? What! Will you
 "put-up with this Affront? Will you pass-
 "bye this Injury? Have you no Feeling for
 "your Reputation? Why, Man! You
 "must prepare to be spit upon, to be
 "insulted, to be trampled on by Every in-
 "significant Mortal; if You do not teach
 "all Men, at the Expence of One insolent
 "One, the Respect which is due to You.
 "Ah! Away then with this scrupulous
 "Tameness

" Tamenefs and *descend* from the Crofs."
 This Other Young Lady, call'd by her
 heavenly Spoufe, resolves to conquer the
 World, by withdrawing from it, with Fruit,
 for Chrif's fake, before It can have time to
 withdraw from her without Benefit. And
 therefore, even before She can quit it with
 her Body, She renounces it in her Mind and
 Heart; defpifes It's Enjoyments; and delights
 only in facred Solitude. But immediately
 is She befieged by her Companions, by her
 feeming Friends, by her Relations. " For
 " Goodnefs-Sake, *they cry*, what means
 " this melancholy Humour which has
 " feized You? Who has put this frantic
 " Notion in your Head? Don't you con-
 " fider what Good you may do in the
 " World? How much Comfort and Ho-
 " nour you may do your Parents? What
 " Edification you may give to your Com-
 " panions? The World wants fuch good
 " Creatures as you for Examples. Away
 " then with the vapourifh Thought. You
 " are too young as yet: Have You not
 " Variety of Pleafures ready to court you?
 " And furely there is no Sin in giving a little
 " Loofe to lawful Pleafures? Do you think,
 " we are not as defirous to be faved as
 " You can be? Come, come, in fhort:
 " Let us go to-night to the Play, to-mor-
 " row to a Ball, next Day to Quadrille.
 VOL. II, Qq " There

"There will be Time enough some Years
 "hence to think on such a dull Affair :
 "And believe me, it requires some Years
 "to think maturely on a Change of Station ;
 "especially Such a One. Ah ! Take our
 "Advice then and *descend from the Cross.*"
 Thus from Age to Age have the Devils Sol-
 licitors, first Jews, and since Christians, la-
 bour'd to separate from the Cross both
 Christ and his Servants.

And You in the mean Time, O heartless
 Souls, what are you about ? O Christians !
 Will you, forgetful of your Faith, permit
 yourselves to be seduced ? Shall you listen
 to the *Devil's* Sollicitors, yield to a Word of
 Satan, and break your Word with Christ ?
 Shall you be carried away by Ambition,
 Avarice, Revenge, and hanker after the
 Flesh-pots of carnal Pleasure ? Is this imi-
 tating his Constancy ? Is this returning him
 Love for Love ? O ! Woe to us ; had He
 not set us the Example we are so loth to
 follow ! Had Christ been as willing to part
 from his Cross as We are to be rid of ours ;
 ah ! Who would have redeem'd us ? Who
 would have extinguish'd for us the Flames
 of Hell ? Who would have open'd to us the
 eternal Gates of Heaven ? And is our Un-
 steadiness all the Return we have to make
 him ? Shall He have embraced an enormous
 Cross, and We evade the trivial Cross of an
 offensive

offensive Word? Shall He have clung to the Cross, in spite of a whole insulting Populace: And We be decoy'd away from it, by the Sollicitations of deluded Friends? Look-ye, Christians: CONSTANCY is the Word. Weigh well your Obligations, examen your latent Forces, correct your Inconstancy, and exert your Fortitude against all future Trials. Be prepared for the Worst, and if there should be a necessity, in the Cause of Constancy in Good, to suffer for, or to die with, the Son of God; resolve, like what you are, Disciples of Christ, and bravely say EACH to JESUS with St. Peter, tho' with greater Steadiness, *Lord, with Thee I am ready to go into Prison and unto Death.* You, who, like the *Jews*, sing *Hosanna*, this Day, *to the Blessed, who cometh in the Name of the Lord*, have a care that your Crimes do not, in their Notes, one Day, cry-out: *Crucify him, Crucify him.* Remember that, if you are frail and wavering by Nature, you may be firm and steady by his Grace. Remember, that You, who are but too constant in what is Evil, are inexcusable if you are not as firm in Good. Remember then, that it is not so much to Frailty or to Fickleness, as to want of Care and Vigilance, you must impute your eternal Perdition. And that, if you relapse, your Inconstancy may be the Cause of your Damnation, Christians; as

Q q 2 That

Sixth Indiction of the PASSION.

That of the Jews was of Ruin to them. But O! Avert it, Gracious God, I earnestly beseech Thee: *In the Name, &c.*

Sixth INDICATION of the PASSION.

I know not whether or not any of You, Christians, are fond of the Diversions of the Stage. If you are; I condole with you on the Loss You will be at this Week on account of the Theatres being shut-up, as I presume they will be according to Custom. And to repair this Loss, as much as is consistent with my Function, I invite You All to a very solemn Tragedy at this Place on next *Good-Friday*, It will not take-up three Hours of your Attention, nor require you to undergo a five or six-hours Confinement to hear it. But I may venture to promise you, that, without the Assistance of any pompous Ranting, it will be the deepest, most affecting, and most interesting Scene of real Distress, you ever yet lent your Attention to. I cannot answer, that You will be quite as commodiously seated as you might be at *Covent-Garden*. But there is some Difference in the Dignity of the Place and the Importance of the Subject, sufficient to make an ample Amends: And one considerable Advantage you will have here, is, that you will not be so much exposed to Colds and many others Hazards of Body and Soul.

You

You easily perceive, I am talking of the Passion of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, which I then intend to preach: In which I shall observe the same Method, as is practised in Catholic Countries. I shall not indeed be quite so long as is customary there: And yet Heaven grant, that I may not appear too tedious for the Devotion of Some! I premise this on purpose, that Such delicate Christians as are afraid of sharing too much in the Sufferings of their Saviour, even that one Day, may either contrive to be absent or previously provide for their Ease on that Occasion.

Abutteffim, or (as Some Historians call him) *Abuttellim*, King of the *Telufinians*, having incurr'd the Hatred of *Joseph* King of *Pez*, the Latter rais'd a powerful Army and march'd at the Head of it quite to *Telufin*, the Seat of *Abutteffim*'s Dominions, in order to lay Siege to that Capital: Not doubting but He should soon become Master of it and without much Difficulty. But *Abutteffim*, who was no Stranger to his Attempt, fortify'd the City, threw himself into it with a strong Power and disappointed him. *Joseph* nevertheless, instead of being discouraged by Disappointment, made obstinate by Opposition, carried on the Siege with Resolution and Vigour: Yet all to no Purpose. The besieged Monarch with intrepid Bravery sustain'd the frequent Attacks
of

of the Enemy, repulsed them in every Assault, and by his Wisdom and Courage inspired and enabled his Subjects to baffle all the Efforts of Violence, Stratagem, and Invention to force and surprise the Town. Thus persisted These two contending Powers in rude Dispute, the One trying to overpower or over-reach, the Other repelling Force and Art, with Art and Force: And Victory, remaining Neuter, fuel'd the furious Contest for the uninterrupted Space of Seven Years: When Famine at length found a Way into the City, which neither the Rage nor Craft of War could open. A while the brave Inhabitants struggled with the intestine Foe, and bore the fiercer Shocks of Hunger Thirst and Want of every Necessary with a Magnanimity worthy of their former Conduct: Till finding at last that their Spirits as well as Strength were wasting as fast as their Provisions, and seeing themselves thus likely to be reduced to the dire Dilemma of dying by Famine or the Sword, they began to suspect their own Bravery: Doubting whether it would not be Fool-Hardiness rather than Courage to dare the Cruelty of the Former sooner than court the Mercy of the Latter. Wherefore, urged by a Distress which seems void of Relief, and not knowing what other Counsel to take, they throw themselves unanimously at their beloved Monarch's Feet,
“ beseeching

“ beseeching him to remember the Wounds
“ they have received, the Fatigues they
“ have endured, the Hardships they have
“ borne and the much they have chearfully
“ done and suffer’d for, and with him,
“ while there remain’d any Hopes that
“ Fortune would, sooner or later, favour
“ the Justness of his Cause: Adding that
“ that the Constancy of their former Efforts
“ might suffice to give his Majesty a full
“ Proof of their Fidelity Zeal and Attach-
“ ment to his sacred Person and Interests;
“ and that, if the Desperacy of their present
“ Condition render’d them incapable of
“ being any longer serviceable to their
“ natural Sovereign, neither their Courage
“ nor Fidelity ought to be question’d for
“ yielding to Force, when become the
“ inevitable Effect of Necessity. Where-
“ fore they hoped their Royal Master, in
“ Consideration of their past Services and
“ present Impotence, would give them Leave
“ to try a better Fate in a timely Surrender
“ to insolent Violence.” *Abuttesim* listen’d
to their Remonstrance with a Firmness and
Serenity becoming the Greatness of his
Soul; and, compassionating the Depth of
their Distress without departing from the
noble Sublimity of his Character and Sen-
timents, answer’d them. “ That, for his
“ Part, he had but one Death to meet, and
“ all Ways of Dying were alike to him,
“ so

“ so his Virtue expired not before him :
 “ That he could not but be sensible of
 “ the Great Sufferings of his Subjects since
 “ he had all-along borne an equal Share of
 “ those Sufferings with them : And that
 “ He was still ready to encounter worse
 “ Evils for and with Them ; whose Safety
 “ he had always consulted without any
 “ View to his own Interest : That true
 “ Constancy consists not in bearing
 “ many Evils, but in being unconquer’d
 “ by the Worst : That therefore he could
 “ by no means consent to their losing the
 “ the Merit of all their past Actions, by
 “ preferring an infamous Life to a glorious
 “ Death. Wherefore he persuaded them
 “ to persist in a noble Defence to the Last ;
 “ and, for the Rest, to convince them of the
 “ perfect Disinterestedness of his Advice,
 “ he exposed his Bosom naked to them and
 “ declared, that HE WAS READY TO DE-
 “ VOTE THAT FLESH TO APPEASE
 “ THE HUNGER OF THE LEAST OF
 “ HIS SUBJECTS.” Heroic Generosity,
 worthy of immortal Praise !

The Generosity however of the *Telusian*
 Monarch extended no farther than a verbal
 Offer. Yet had It the Efficacy to revive
 the drooping Spirits of his People, who re-
 solved, in a Sally, which was agreed upon
 for the next Day, to follow their Sovereign

to Battle and conquer or die along with him.

O Christians! JESUS not only gave his Body to save your Souls from Want of Spiritual Nourishment; but really gave it, to be rent and torn and mangled at the Mercy of a Herd of Butchers, to animate you to a virtuous Struggle against *Satan* who is laying constant Siege to your Hearts. Long had the infernal Tyrant labour'd to block-up human Nature in this World from every heavenly Succour; and gall'd and harrafs'd it with frequent rude Assaults and crafty Stratagems to over-power it with Violence or over-reach it with base Artifice. But our eternal Sovereign and Saviour, who generously (with the strong Power of his numerous Graces) threw himself into the World, by taking human Flesh, undertook the World's Defence; fought both for and with Mankind against their Common Enemy for three and thirty Years; and finally, to shew his liberal disinterested Love for Man, kindly gave-up his blessed Body to be crucified for Man; that, fed and fortified with his precious Flesh, Man might more earnestly persist in combating the envious Fiend, and never suffer his Constancy and Fortitude to be worried or worne-out by any of the Serpents teizing Violences or deluding Artifices. But ah! What good Effects has all this Generosity yet wrought in You?

Has it yet prevail'd to make you steady in the Cause of Virtue? Has it yet fired you with Resolution to die or conquer Sin, which cost your GOD and Saviour so much Flesh and Blood to oppose the Progress of?

Had *Abutteffim*, as he proffer'd, given his Body to the Butchers to be cut in Pieces for the Nourriture of his famish'd Subjects, and Some ingenious Poet had wrought the melancholy Story into tragic Drama; how would not Every-one of You, if present at the Acting of it, have melted at the bloody Scene and bathed the Stage with unextorted Tears of liquid Sympathy? How would not You, seiz'd with a noble Sense of Pity and Revenge, wish him again alive; that you might die or conquer in the Cause of such a generous Prince? And shall JESUS have been really butcher'd for your Sakes; yet you remain insensible? Yet you not be disposed to make one Effort to resist the slightest Trial for his Sake; but leave his Standard to surrender at the very first Approach of a Temptation? Ah! To what Purpose then has JESUS left to you his sacred Flesh for Food? What can his generous Death for You avail you; if You never think enough on it, for That to excite you to imitate his Constancy; if You never eye it with Seriousness enough to pay him the Tribute of one tender Tear? On *Friday* next therefore, I invite you to a
Rehearsal

Rehearsal of this Tragedy. At which I hope to see you all in Tears. The Fact is so affecting, it will need no Pomp of Words, no Helps of Rhetoric, no Poetic Flights, to melt your Souls (if you have Souls to melt) to Pity for your Lord, and more to a just Grief for your own past Insensibility to all He has done and suffer'd for You. Then shall you hear each bleeding Limb of his with reproachful Tenderness cry-out to You :

“ O Christians! Why, why thus irresolute
“ in Good? What Evils have you borne as
“ yet, what Wounds have you to shew,
“ what Toils and Hardships have you
“ endured, which I have not shared with
“ you? I had but one mortal Life to lose;
“ and that I chearfully resign'd for You;
“ to teach you that Death is no Evil
“ when the Cause you die for, or die
“ in, is good. Fight on then and struggle
“ even to Death with that inveterate Foe,
“ who never will give over teizing and
“ tempting you while you have Life.
“ Remember, your Victory is in your
“ Hands. I dy'd to purchase it for you.
“ Remember, if you have lost Ground,
“ the greater Cause you have to fight
“ more manfully henceforth to re-gain
“ that Ground. Remember, that Christian
“ Constancy consists not in repelling many
“ Temptations, but in persisting to the
“ last in conquering all. Reflect that, if

“ you are by Nature weak, my Grace
 “ can make you strong. If you have
 “ hitherto been indolent or faithless in
 “ your Christian warfare ; it is high Time
 “ to fight with double Fervor. If you
 “ have hitherto contended nobly for the
 “ glorious Palm ; it is now too late to tar-
 “ nish all the Glory of your past religious
 “ Struggles, by suffering any Trial to over-
 “ come you for the future. What In-
 “ terest but yours could I have in View, in
 “ giving-up my precious Flesh and Blood,
 “ that it might invigorate you against your
 “ Spiritual Enemies ? Why did I leave it you
 “ but to make the Feeble Strong, to make
 “ the Strong more vigorous ? Ah ! use
 “ then this sacred Food to repair the little
 “ Wastes of Grace, which Human Frailty
 “ may effect ; and, fed and cherish’d with
 “ it, be constant in resisting the invete-
 “ rate Foe, who never ceases to besiege
 “ your Souls in hopes of forcing or sur-
 “ prising them into Ruin : Be firm and
 “ you shall conquer.” O Christians ! If
 this melting Language which every bleed-
 ing Limb of JESUS speaks, is not enough
 to force a Flood of Pity into your Eyes ;
 if it is not capable of striking Fire in your
 Hearts ; if it will not animate you to ever-
 lasting Love for Christ and Constancy in
 his Service ; I have done with you, I give
 you up for lost. In short, Christians, if
 you

you are not affraid of being prest into your Saviour's Service; be present at his Passion next *Friday*: And give all your Attention to his Sufferings. But then be sure you bring with you the Dispositions of Piety necessary to render your Attention fruitful. For whoever, on that Day, shall attend and not give themselves up to Christ with all Tenderneſs Love and Conſtancy, They will evidently ſhew, that either, with Exceſs of Infidelity, they diſbelieve the Sufferings of our God; or, with Exceſs of Ingratitude, diſregard them.





S E R M O N

ON

E A S T E R S U N D A Y.

St. M A R K xvi. 6, 7.

Be not dismay'd: You seek JESUS of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen He, is not here.... He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him.



LAST Sunday, Beloved Christians, the Gospel invited us to take part with Christ in a solemn seemingly chearful Triumph which was big with Nothing but the most terrifying Apprehensions of funeral Grief. This Day, to make us ample Amends, It invites us to his Sepulchre with the *Marys*, that our Funeral Rites may be big wiith Nothing but triumphal Joy. Last Sunday, mindful of one Part of his Prediction to his Beloved

loved Disciples, *The World shall rejoice, but You shall be made Sorrowful*; we con-
doled with our JESUS, amidst the loudest
Acclamations of public Alacrity: To-day
made Witnesses of the Accomplishment of
that other Part, *Your Sorrow shall be con-
verted into Joy*; we congratulate with Jesus
and raise our Voices in chearful *Alleluiahs*
amidst the profoundest Silence of Death
and Sin and Satan. Last Sunday, in a
word, the melancholy Prospect of future
Sufferings and Death, which the Inconstancy
of the *Jews* threaten'd JESUS with, fill'd
our Souls with too many Terrors not to
damp all our Pleasures and make the Matter
of his Triumph the Subject of our Dejec-
tion. But ah! The glorious Fruits, which
the Constancy of JESUS has, this Day,
drawn from those Sufferings and that
Death, both for himself and Us, are too
abounding not to dissipate all our Fears, all
our Doubts, all our Grievs, and make us
triumph over the Sepulchre. Away then,
Christians, let us haste to his Tomb, to
rejoice over his lifeless Body, We who
were constrain'd to weep over it living!
If we grieved to see him suffering on his
Cross; we will rejoice to see his precious
Limbs, in the Sepulchre, no more sensible
to Sufferings. If we wept to see his Blessed
Frame profaned and disfigured with Spittle
Dirt and Bruises; let our Consolation be to
anoint

anoint and embalm it in the Monument. In a word, Let us bury our Hearts in one Grave with JESUS; and let our Comfort be henceforth to hug the melancholy Thought, that We are still living to weep for JESUS, who having suffer'd all which could be suffer'd, is now deceased and capable no more of suffering. Come then, Dismay! be Thou our Joy; and lead us forward to JESUS in his Tomb. But ah where is He! Where indeed Christians? If you seek JESUS in his Sepulchre; how should you find him? Away then, away with all your Griefs. This is a Day which calls on You for all the Joy your Souls are able to exert. Away from his Tomb, *I say: And be not dismay'd. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen; He is not here. He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him.* O welcome News big with extatic Gladness! O Heaven! Supply me with more Souls than One! Or kindly dilate this One to a Capacity of bearing such Excess of Joy; ere It constrain my Heart to burst with the Enjoyment of all which Devotion has of most exquisit Delight. O my Dear Auditors! How does the Narrowness of our Spirits confine us from feeling all the Joy we would! But since it is so: But since We cannot rejoice as we would; let us rejoice all we can. This sacred Mystery of
Christ's

Christ's Resurrection is full of Mysteries and all demand their separate Joy: All are joyful alike, but all are not equally fruitful to us in their Joy. Let us then lay-out our Alacrity on those Reflections which are most likely to fructify Edification to us. And since our Hearts are not capacious enough to rejoice sufficiently with JESUS on his glorious Resurrection, let us employ all our Joy in thanking his Mercy, that We are risen along with him. " Let Every-
 " One, *says a venerable Father*: Let Every-
 " One who rejoices in the Resurrection of
 " Christ, rejoice chiefly that He himself is
 " risen in and with Christ." For my own Part, Christians, I am resolved to draw all my present Joy from the Blessed Source which the Angel points-out to the three *Marys*. And tho' all my Dismay for the Death of Jesus is banish'd by the grateful News that *He is risen*; yet the chief Subject of my Joy is to reflect that *He is gone before us into Galilee*, and that *there We shall see him*. To make You then Sharers in the Motives of my present Joy, I shall now proceed to the pleasing Task of shewing You,

I. What exquisit Comfort the Mystery of our Divine Lord's Resurrection is capable of affording to such Christians as

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S f

take

On EASTER SUNDAY.

take Care to imitate him in it by a perfect spiritual Resurrection.

II. What this spiritual Resurrection must consist in ; and how it must be acquired and maintain'd.

“ O lovely JESUS! O no more suffering
 “ but triumphing JESUS! O Thou, who,
 “ this Day, in an ample Victory over Death
 “ and Sin, has't raised us to the Liberty of
 “ Grace and open'd to us a free Access to
 “ eternal Life! Vouchsafe to make us grate-
 “ ful to Thee for this Excess of Bounty.
 “ And since thy Constancy in suffering and
 “ dying for us has purchased us the Grace
 “ of rising with Thee in the Newness of
 “ our Spirit ; O add the Gift of Perseve-
 “ rance to thy former Mercies ; That We
 “ may die no more but to the Flesh and
 “ Sin ! ”

I. O! What a Consolation would it not be to Us, Christians ; and how tolerable would it not make the bitter Pill of mortal Life ; could we but be possess'd of a Preservative against the Terrors of Death? And what greater or more exquisit Comfort could we wish to draw from the Resurrection of JESUS than to see Death so deprest by it and his Power so abridged as that We might chearfully say, Death has lost his Sting and exists only in his Name. But Whatever a
Chrysostom

Chriftom might advance to strengthen his Affertion, that, " Chrift by rifing from " the Dead, has deftroy'd the very Names " of Hell and Death:" Whatever Arguments I might add to perfuade you that the Separation of the Soul from the Body has now Nothing terrible in it but what our ill-grounded Fears create: You would, None of You be difpofed to believe me. Nor indeed (to act the fincere Part which becomes me) can I fay, that I fhould readily believe myfelf. What! Surely the Correfpondence between the Spirit and the Flefh of Man is not of fo cold and indifferent a Nature, that Each can part from the Other without Either's feeling the reciprocal Convulfions of Anguifh excited by Sympathetic Diffrefs? It no way furprifes us when we read the fad Story of the two *Grecian* Ladies, who, when *Conftantinople* was Sack'd by the *Turks* and It's Inhabitants were carried-away into Slavery, fell into the Hands of two different Mafters. Thefe two fond Sisters, yet more ftrongly allied by Friendship than Blood, feeing themfelves on the Point of being feparated forever in this Life, ran of one Accord into Each-other's Arms to take their laft Adieu; and thus eagerly clinging Soul to Soul, in the Expreffion of their mutual Regret to be fever'd, they expired in the Embraces of infeparable Love; and died together unable

to sustain the cruel Anguish of subsisting apart. And what is the Union of the fondest nearest Relations to the Intimacy of Soul and Body? What wonder then can it be that These should not be able to separate without feeling the Spasm of an excruciating Agony? Let what will then be said, I cannot help thinking, with *St. Peter Chrysologus*, that Death is a dreadful Adversary to confront; since “ the bare Aspect of it “ is sufficient to terrify and Dismay every “ human Sense and Sensation.”

Think me not therefore of so fantastic or abstrused a Genius, Beloved Christians; as to think of denying you the little natural Tribute of Anguish, the little Vents of Repugnance, which are indulged even to every trivial Friendship. The joyful Reflection that *JESUS of Nazareth who was crucified is risen*, may tranquilize the tumultuous Sallies of Nature; stifle them It cannot. I neither say then, nor mean to say, that Death may not awaken in You any Horrors. But I do say, as *St. Paul* said before me: It is highly reasonable, that, reflecting on the Resurrection of *JESUS*, you should take Courage, moderate your Fears, and *not be sorrowful, as also Others who have no Hope*: * That the Fears of Christians, who know that Christ is risen from the Dead to raise them to Life with him, and who therefore hope to rise with him, to rise like him, glorious

* *1 Thessa-*
lonians IV.

glorious and immortal, ought to be more filial more modest more moderate less uncomfortable than Those of Unbelievers who are void of Hope. Shall we see in the Mirror of Contemplation, those Divine Members, which but three Days ago with weeping Eyes we bewail'd eclipsed and disfigured with Blood and Dirt and Bruises; Shall we, *I say*, perceive those sacred Members shoot-forth from the Sepulchre, like a New Sun from the *East*, all clad with resplendent Rays of Light and Glory; and shall we not remain secure and comforted in our certain Hopes, built on his never-failing Promise, that, rising with him, these Members too of Ours shall fare no worse; tho' now so miserable that we can scarce support them with any Consolation? O the sweet Reflection! How ought not this enchanting Thought to dissipate the thickest Clouds of Melancholy which the Apprehensions of our Dissolution are capable of raising in us? Observe but the Sun, says St. *Zeno*: "The Sun has it's
" Birth in the Morning, and the Evening
" of the Day which gave Birth to it buries
" all it's Lights: Still does it not hesitate
" to move forward towards It's End,
" but steadily meets the Night which is
" to serve for it's Sepulchre; sure of having
" the Tomb of it's fainting Rays converted
" into a Cradle of the Fulness of it's future
" Splendor." And why should that luminous

minous Phenix (if I may be indulged the Metaphor) hesitate to undergo an Eclipse which shall renew it to Glory? Why shun a Tomb which shall restore it more brilliant? Why start back from a Cloud which shall revive it to all it's native Splendor? O Christians! What is the Death of this Flesh but like the Eclipse of the Sun? Would to Heaven I could say that in our Constancy, we resemble that Planet! But, alas, Such is our pusillanimous Inconstancy that we cannot with any Comfort resolve to meet Death, tho' Faith assures us, that we are parting from Ourselves only to succeed Ourselves; that our Sepulchres (tired with keeping our stale Putrefaction) will restore us back to ourselves; that, in a word, our Flesh, crumbled into Dust and Ashes, shall out of those very Ashes rise again to a new Form and Life: But O what a Form! How beauteous! How much more noble! How much more perfect! How much more excellent!

JOB, that Image of Death in it's most terrifying Disguise, *who with a Shell scraped-off the Corruption*, * from his Body, was *sitting on his Dunghill*, † enjoying (as it was) his Sores, hugging his Worms and delighting in the Misery which corroded him. But what! JOB *sitting*? Is not Sitting a Posture of Content? Yes, if We believe the Sacred Expositors, it is not only a Posture of Content but of Alacrity? Ah! what

* Job ii.

† Ibid.

What Cause of Alacrity, what Subject of Joy then could our miserable Sufferer find to amuse him? What, tho', nauseating every Aliment of his Life, which, like a rotted Marsh, had nothing to feed him with but the coarsest Weeds, he could bear; with a Steadiness more than heroic, the Heaven-bred Fire which consumed his rich Flocks and his Fields, the Whirlwind which robb'd him of his Houses and Hopes, and the Destruction which swept away his Riches and Servants? Could he have Bowels of Tenderness and not dissolve them through his Eyes in Tears of Compassion for the tragic Catastrophe of ten Children taken-off at a Stroke? Could he have any Spirits left and not resent the injurious insolent Aggravations of his taunting Friends? Could he have a Soul and not be fired with Indignation at the bitter detested Counsels and Suggestions of an ill-advised Consort? What then, and where was the Matter to afford him Occasion of Alacrity? Were his Sores, his Poverty, Putrefaction and Pains such Subjects of Joy, that JOB could *sit* and enjoy himself on his Dunghill? Ah Christians! As *Origenes* justly observes on this Passage, We are not sufficiently apprised of the mysterious Comforts of a well-grounded Hope. JOB prophetically contemplates his Sores and lodges them in the Wounds of that crucified JESUS, who is to heal them. Con-
sidering

sidering those Sores on the Dunghill he
 bemoans them: But hence rising to behold
 them glorious beyond the Dunghill, and
 comparing present JOB with JOB who is
 to be, He bemoans only his present Weak-
 ness in being concern'd at them. In short,
 JOB in Pain is comforted with the foresight
 of JOB in Glory; JOB in Corruption rejoices
 at JOB in Resurrection. "JOB *says this*
 "*learned Father*, sat content on the Dung-
 "hill in the Enjoyment of his Worms;
 "because confident, that, after this Corrup-
 "tion, his Flesh should rise to Incorruption."
 Ah! Methinks I see this holy Martyr of
 Patience sitting triumphant over his Mi-
 series with all that Serenity which the
 Holy-Ghost has recorded of him, and
 which Nothing could give him but the
 blessed Foresight of the sacred Mystery
 which this Day excites all our Transports
 of Joy. "Courage (methinks he cries
 "Courage my Soul) *Naked came I out of*
 "*my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I*
 "*return. The Lord gave and the Lord*
 "*bath taken away: Let the Name of the*
 "*Lord be blessed for Both.* * Welcome
 "Losses! Welcome Pains! Which shall be
 "recover'd with so much Lucre and De-
 "light: Come then, Corruption, feed on
 "these Sores; strip these Members naked of
 "Flesh; lay-open to View these Bones and
 "Nerves and Sinews. Ah! There will
 "come

* Ibid.

" come; yes there will come a Day, when
 " a better Portion shall fall to us, become
 " Children of a fairer Inheritance. Already,
 " already do these Eyes, triumphant over
 " Time and Distance, behold gloriously rising
 " from his Sepulchre my Dear Redeemer,
 " my sovereign Restorer, my universal only
 " Good. Hence is my Soul buoy'd-up
 " with such a joyful Hope as makes the
 " Matter of my Pains the Subject of my
 " Joy. For *I know that my Redeemer lives*
 " *and that I am to rise again from the*
 " *Earth.*" O Glorious Pattern of a Hope
 becoming Christians! O how stinging a Re-
 proach wil't not Thou prove to the mean
 Diffidence of slow-believing Christians?
 " Thus, *says Augustin*, behold how holy
 " Job externally over-run with Worms
 " and Corruption, inwardly overflows with
 " Immortality:" And thus, *say I*, learn to
 believe and hope.

no Death, Dearest Christian Auditors, may
 destroy us; annihilate us It cannot. It di-
 vides Indeed the Soul from the Body; but
 has not the Power to take away from Either
 the Seeds of their mutual Intimacy. No,
 no: Our Spirits shall return, must return
 again to re-embrace these Members, dear
 to them indeed; but frailly, refractorily,
 treacherously dear to them at present;
 whereas hereafter the very same Mem-
 bers shall be dear to them as ever, but

shall be faithfully obediently eternally so,
 Away then, Doubts, and Fears, and
 Diffidences, from these Christian Hearts!
 Away vain senseless Melancholy and Dis-
 may! Come: Rather let us Joyfully re-
 pair together to the Sepulchre of Christ,
 there to throw-off all idle Apprehen-
 sions of that blessed Dissolution which
 shall yield us so substantially so gloriously
 so everlasting to ourselves. But in his
 Tomb? Ah! He is no more there. No
 matter. So much the more then, *Be not*
dismay'd. You seek Jesus of Nazareth,
who was crucified? And He is risen? And
He is not here? The greater Reason then
 have You and to throw-off all our Fears of
 Death, now conquer'd, now dethroned.
 The Greater Cause have we with Joy to
 seek our Sepulchre in that of JESUS, and,
 lodged with our Affections in it, to trust
 that we shall rise with him. Ah! Let
 then these Bodies of Clay, dissolve when
 God shall please; if they are to be new
 form'd again, never more to be dissolved.
 Let the Corruption of this Flesh be buried
 in the Earth, since it shall thence rise
 forth to Incorruption. Come Death, and
 strip us; the sooner the better: Strip us of
 these Rags of Mortality, that They may be
 refitted into Robes of immortal Glory.
 What is it to us, whether sooner or later we
 descend to rot a while in the Grave; when
 sure,

sure, that *our Redeemer liveth and that we shall rise out of the Earth and shall be encompass'd again with our Skin and in our Flesh shall see GOD: Whom we shall see, Ourselves; and our Eyes shall behold? * Ah!* ** Job xix.*
 With what Fears can Death or the Grave affect us; while *This Hope is laid up in our Bosom?*

O how penurious nevertheless would not the Source of Joy be, which we draw, this Day, from the Resurrection of JESUS; if, after being thus gloriously restored to ourselves and to such unspeakable Advantage, We were again to endure the Agony of another Dissolution! But ah my glorified Love! This, this is the Comfort transcending all other Comforts, that thy glorious Resurrection secures us from a second Separation. What more joyous Sight can we wish for than to see our Souls become once more Inhabitants, but more happy Inhabitants for Eternity, of those Bodies no longer frail, no longer wretched, no longer perishable; but firm happy and unalterable? O blessed Consolation, the sweetest which could shoot-forth to us from the Sepulchre of JESUS! Reason had the ingenious St. *Peter Chrysologus* to call the Sepulchre *a second Kind of Womb*. For Christ thence taking his sacred Flesh again was re-born to us with a Newness of Life no more subject to Dissolution: And We, made Heirs to his blessed Prerogatives,

once We have had these Members re-mo-
del'd *in the second Womb of the Grave*, shall
be put in Possession of the same glorious
Advantages. Yes these Bodies shall rise
thence more beauteous than before, without
ever being disfigured by any Deformity;
ever in Peace undisturb'd by Dissention;
always pure, without danger from Incen-
tives; always in Health, free from Humours
to annoy it; always in Joy which no
Nuisance shall approach to molest; " always
" in Day (*as St. Zeno describes it*) which
" nor Night shall eclipse, nor Cloud over-
" spread, nor Shadow disturb."

So tender, so transporting is this Thought,
that, violenting all the Faculties of my Soul,
It disables me from pursuing this Subject.
Ah dearest Auditors! With what Regret do
I drop here the Matter of our greatest Con-
solation, because too abounding with De-
light is the Argument to dwell on it, with-
out weakening our Senses! O could I also
but drop with the Matter of my Joy, the
Body of this Death which so depresses the
Vivacity of my Hopes! O lovely Stars, which,
shining so gayly at Night, are eclipsed ere
the Dawn! O sprightly Flowers, which,
gayly blooming in the Morning, languish
with the setting Sun! How do I envy the
shortness of your Existence on the Earth?
How do my yearning Vitals, with anxious
Restlessness, send forth their eagerest
Sighs

Sighs after the Life and Author of all Life and Existence: O my Redeemer! What with-holds me from taking Refuge in that Sepulchre, in that Grave, which Thou has't past through to enrich Christianity with the noblest Pretensions? What shall I say but, with St. Paul, * that, *I am strait-en'd . . . having Desire to be dissolved and be with Christ.* Ah! We are straiten'd; Yes: And therefore unable to say more; let me shut me up within me. O my Soul! I ask thee no Questions, why Thou delayest Thus to quit this Prison of Mortality. It is fit the Will of Heaven should be thine. But O my Heart! O my Flesh! O my Senses! With You let me reason. Why this strange Repugnance to Death and the Grave? The Point is,---to throw-off the miserable Condition of a Body full of Pains, full of Aches, full of Wants, full of Wretchedness, Mortal, prone to Sin, prone to Folly, prone to Destruction; and That in order to put-on again this same Body in a perfect State, a State of Ease, a State of Freedom, a State of Delight, secured from every Want, every Danger, every Evil: And yet shall you start-back at the Thought of Death, with a Horror and Dismay, *like Others who have not Hope?* Away, away with these idle Terrors: Remember that, *Flesh and Blood in it's present miserable Condition, cannot possess the Kingdom of God: Neither shall Corruption*

* 1 Philipp.
xxiii.

* 1 Cor. xv. *Corruption possess Incorruption.* * No: To live eternally with Christ you must die with Christ. For this Corruptible must put-on Incorruption; and this Mortal put-on Immortality. And when this Mortal hath put-on Immortality; then indeed shall Death be swallow'd-up in Victory, † the Victory which this glorious Day has wrought. Away then, once more, I say, with your vain Terrors: See in Spirit how your Redeemer shews you his sacred Scars all-brilliant with glorious Splendor. Behold his sacred Body, one Time all livid torne and shamefully disfigured, now gay and firm and luminous; immortal glorified and heavenly: Such too shall all our Bodies be, if we sustain with him. Understand what I say, says † 2 Tim. ii. our Apostle, † Be mindful, that our Lord, JESUS CHRIST is risen again from the Dead. A faithful Saying: For if we be dead with him; we shall also live with him. If we sustain; we shall also reign with him. Such Beloved Auditors, Such is the exquisit Comfort which our Divine Lord's Resurrection is big with to every Christian, who takes Care to imitate him in it by rising with him in Spirit.

II. If you have accompanied your Saviour in his Death, Beloved Christians, by becoming dead to Sin and sinful Inclinations; you are now, I hope risen, with him to a Life of
of

of Grace. Your Resurrection then, to be like his, must consist in a steady Perseverance in Grace. Christ is risen for his own sake: Christ is risen for Yours. He is risen for his own sake, to conquer Death: And therefore now *He stands; He dies no more; Death shall have no more Dominion over him.* He is risen for Your sakes, to triumph over Sin and take from You that only Sting of Death: Therefore are you in Imitation of him henceforth to *stand unshaken in his Love, to die no more to Grace; Death must have no more Dominion over you, by any future Relapse into Sin, into sinful Occasions, or Affections.* In short, the Standard of your Resurrection must be the perfect Newness of your Desires. Wherefore, says St. PAUL, *If you be risen with Christ seek the Things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the Right-Hand of God. Mind the Things which are above; not the Things which are on Earth.* * For ^{Colossians} ^{iii.} if you really are risen with Christ; *You are Dead to the World: And your Life is hidden with Christ in God.* † And the ^{† Ibid.} blessed Fruit of this spiritual Resurrection will be, that, *when Christ, your Life, shall appear; then You also shall appear with him in Glory.* † ^{† Ibid.}

To take then a perfect Plan of our spiritual Resurrection from That of our Divine Lord, let me once more, Christians, invite you

you to accompany me, with the Spices of
 a perfect Zeal and Humility, to the Monu-
 ment of my JESUS. Here let us con-
 template our glorious Model, triumphant
 over his Tomb and learn to triumph with
 him. But here, *did I say?* No: *I forgot*
JESUS, who was crucified, is risen. His vacant
 Monument forestalls the Angel's Testimony,
 that *He is risen:* 'Tis vain then to seek
 him, at his Tomb, now *He is risen.* Yes,
 yes; it is quite in vain. *He is not there,* the
 heavenly Messenger declares. Ah! Where
 then celestial Spirit, where shall we seek
 him? "Where? Not in his Tomb, re-
 plies the Angel. JESUS when crucified,
 was laid in this Sepulchre. But now
 He is risen: *He is not here.* Behold
 the Place where they lay'd him, and be
 convinced, that He has now forsaken it;
 that He has turn'd his back on it, never
 to return to it again. Now He stands:
 He dies no more; Death shall have no
 more Dominion over him. Go then; and
 if you died to Sin as He died for it: ---
 Go then, and if you are risen to Grace,
 as He to Glory; copy after him: For-
 sake the Sepulchre of your former Cor-
 ruptions, never more to revert to it.
 Stand firm in your good Purposes, die
 no more to His Grace, by Relapses. Let
 the Death of Sin and sinful Affections
 have no more Dominion over You. You
 seek

“ seek Jesus of Nazareth who was cruci-
 “ fied? He is risen: He is not here. Go
 “ then, once more; and if you seek him
 “ in good earnest with the Desire of find-
 “ ing him, seek him where he is, not
 “ where he is not. Behold (concludes the
 “ Angel not without Mystery) *He goes be-*
 “ *fore you into GALILEE: There You*
 “ *shall see him.*” To GALILEE then,
 Beloved Christians! To GALILEE.

However heedlessly You may have over-lookt this Passage in our Gospel: Believe me, It has it's Mystery; and carries with it an important Lesson worthy of your Attention. GALILEE in *Hebrew* means Nothing less than Revolution. JESUS then after his Resurrection went into Revolution; pass'd into a total Change, a perfect Newness, still perfectly the Same, yet; perfectly Another: The same in his Flesh but not in the Qualities of it. O glorious Revolution of Christ's sacred Body in his Blessed Resurrection, from the Sepulchre to *Galilee*, from Inanimacy to Agility, from Pain to Impassibility, from necessary Extention to Penetrability, from Death to Immortality, from Confinement to Liberty, from Oppression to Triumph, from transitory Shame to endless Glory! O Dearest Christians of mine! Such was the Revolution your crucified Redeemer pass'd over to, in his glorious Resurrection, which makes, this Day,

the Subject of our Joy, the Matter of our greatest Consolation, the Object of our Christian Hope. And O my triumphant Love! O my resplendent JESUS! grant this our Hope may be well-grounded! It will be so, Beloved; if you take care to copy after him in your spiritual Resurrection, by passing forthwith into a serious Revolution of yourselves, a total Change of your Manners, a perfect Newness of your Lives. O the glorious Share you will have in the blessed Fruits of your *Jesus's* Resurrection; if, rising Spiritually with him, you pass after him from the Sepulchre of your former Vices to the *Galilee* of a perfect Conversion; from Indolence and spiritual Sloth to Earnestness and Fervor in Good; from suffering unfruitfully in the Cause of Vice to suffering with Advantage for the Cause of Virtue; from Obduracy of Heart to the yielding Sensibility of Mercy and Charity; from the Death of Sin to a Life of Righteousness; from the Slavery of Satan to the Liberty where with Christ has made us free; from the Weight of Guilt to the Lightness of a good Conscience; and from the Ignominy of a scandalous Conduct to the giving Glory to God in an edifying Deportment. To GALILEE then, to GALILEE, beloved Christians: *There you shall see JESUS.* If You seek him there; You shall surely find him. In this Revolution,

lution, in this perfect Change of yourselves, in this *Galilee* must your spiritual Resurrection consist: In this must it be made manifest. If in this you are seen to *JESUS*; *Jesus* will be seen to You: But not otherwise.

To rise then, to rejoice, to be glorified with Christ, rise with him, be perfectly changed with him; be New with him in Spirit, tho' the same in Person. In short, as *St. PAUL* says, *Mortify therefore your Members which are upon Earth, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lust, Evil-Concupiscence and Avarice which is the Service of Idols. Lay You also away Anger, Indignation, Malice, Blasphemy, filthy Talk out of your Mouth. Lye not One to Another. * It is* ^{* *Colosians*} *for these Things the Wrath of GOD cometh* ^{iii.} *upon the Children of Incredulity. In which also you walk'd sometime, when you lived in them. † But now, I hope, You are Dead* ^{† *Ibid.*} *to These, and your Life is hidden with Christ in GOD. It is now Time then for you to live henceforth a quite opposit Life, and to put-on, as the Elect of GOD holy and beloved, the Bowels of Mercy, Benignity, Humility, Modesty, Patience supporting One-Another; and pardoning One-Another, if Any have a Quarrel against any Man: As also our Lord hath pardon'd us; so also You. ‡ In short, Dear Fellow-Strugglers, †* ^{† *Ibid.*} *If you have hitherto been guilty of Unclean-*
U u 2
ness;

ness; your Lives must henceforth be all Purity and Innocence: If you have despised the Love of God to serve the Idols of your Avarice; you must away with those strange GODS from before him, and give yourselves up to him for the future in the steady Love of Justice, Pursuit of Mercy, and humble Walking in his holy Fear: If you have been Slaves to Passion, Malice and Revenge; You must from this time forward throw-off those slavish Bands and practice Meekness with Freedom, Mercy with Simplicity, and Forgiveness with Cordiality: And if you have hitherto been --- (what shall I say?) --- Any-Thing which you should not have been; throw-off that Any-Thing, whatever it be. And *stripping yourselves of the Old-Man with his Acts, put-on the New, Him who is renew'd unto Knowledge,* * by the Grace of a glorious perfect Resurrection.

* *Ibid*

You, O hitherto Libidinous! Risen from the Sepulchre the loathsome Sepulchre of your Uncleanness, You must return no more thither; you must never approach near it more. You must flee forever from that private Party, that licentious Company, the ensnaring Conversation of that Woman; from that Bagnio, that Coffee-house, that Tavern; from that Assembly, that Occasion, that other Stumbling-block. Hitherto you have dwelt in the Sty of Swine; *What said I?* You have been buried in a Sepulchre

pulchre of Filth, of Corruption, of Horror;
the Jakes of Worms, of Insects, of Vermin.

Now you are pass'd to the *Galilee* of a
perfect Purity. Now you must be all Con-
tinency, all Charity, all Purity. And your
Habitation must be so clean, so chaste, so
spotless, that Angels may delight to accom-
pany you and JESUS may delight in con-
versing with You. O hitherto Revengeful!
You once pass'd, with shameful Revolution
from fraternal Charity to fraternal Hatred;
from the Life of Grace, to the Sepulchre of
Revenge: But now you must pass from the
Sepulchre to *Galilee*: Now to enjoy the
Benefit of your Saviour's Resurrection, your
spiritual Revolution must be from Resent-
ment to Patience, from Passion to Meek-
ness, from Revenge to Forgiveness. That
JESUS CHRIST, whom You, this Day,
adore and joy in the Resurrection of, had
much more bitter Enemies than yours are,
endured much more cruel Injuries than
You ever did, and submitted to much more
crying Injustices than ere were done to You.
Yet did He not only forbear to wreak Ven-
geance on his Enemies; not only did He
forget the Outrages done him; not only
pardon them; but in the Midst of his worst
Treatment pray'd for Those who treated
him thus barbarously: Nay more: Hear O
resentful Christians, and take Example:
He even died for Them as well as for
You;

You; rise again for them as well as for you; and went before into *Galilee* to be seen by, and reconciled with them as well as You. In vain then do you believe in his Death, in vain do you rejoice in his Resurrection, if you copy not his Example. If You forgive not with him and like him; if you part not with every Grudge, every Rancour; you prefer the Sepulchre of your former Enmity to the blessed *Galilee* of Charity and therefore will never be entitled to see the Face of your Lord who is risen and gone before you into *Galilee*, where alone you can see him. Ah! Christians be resolute then: Quit the hateful Sepulchre of former Enmities Vengeance and Rancour; full of Nothing but Anxiety, Restlessness, Fury, Disorders and incessant Horror. And go forwards to the blessed *Galilee*, the happy State of Charity and Reconciliation. In That it is you must seek, and in That alone you will see your JESUS. *who was crucified* for Charity. There all is Calm, all is in Peace: Where Charity reigns, no Discontents can enter to oppress the Heart; no Regrets to molest the Mind; no Jealousies can break Peace; no Injuries can move Indignation; no Broils can interrupt Repose: For Charity softens and sweetens every Incident; fills the Soul with unchangeable Chearfulness; dissipates every Cloud of Disgust;

Disgust; makes the heaviest Burdens light of Carriage; and provides Wine and Oil to heal up every Sore. O Misers! O Covetous! O Worldlings! You too have pass'd from the Life of Obedience to God's Laws to the Sepulchre of sordid Lucre. Hitherto Many of you have made no Scruple of devouring the Substance of your Neighbour, no Scruple of gnawing it away with Your Usury and Oppressions, no Scruple of consuming or at least diminishing it with your Frauds and Infidelities: And Most of You have at least thought of Nothing so much as of becoming Rich. You have now then another quite opposit Revolution to make: From the Sepulchre to *Galilee*. If You are desirous of rising fruitfully with Christ; you must follow Christ. Behold *He goes before you into Galilee: There you shall see him*. He is risen to a perfect Change of State, a perfect Newness: So must you. Your Change must now be from your fraudulent Traffick to lawful Commerce. You must pass from injuring your Brethren to righting them, from oppressing them to succouring them: You must pass yet farther from wronging them to making Restitution where it is due, whether of Substance or of Fame: And you who have not where with to restore what You ought, must wish to do it, long to do it, resolve to do it when able, and redouble your Industry to become
able.

able. Even You who have happily no Restitution to make, have at least your Change also to labour at, a Change from the inordinate Love of Temporal Riches, to a fervent Desire of Eternal Treasures. In short, *If you are risen with Christ seek the Things which are above, where Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified and now is risen, sits at the Right Hand of God: Mind the Things which are above and not the Things which are on Earth.*

You see, Christians, in what your spiritual Resurrection must consist; You see by what Means, you are to imitate your divine Lord in his glorious Resurrection. Remember that this Day we celebrate the new Paschal Solemnity of the Lord. *And This, says the sacred Code, is the PHASE, that is, the Passage of the Lord.* And truly is it the Passage of the Lord, if we make it along with him: In-as-much as it is his Grace which enables us so to do. Implore of him then this Grace of a total Passage, this Grace of a happy Revolution, this Grace of a perfect Change: Implore it with Fervor, Humility and Perseverance, and He will certainly grant it.

To conclude, Reverting Sinners: *The Night is now past, the Day is come, the Great Day of the triumphant Resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Pass then with him from the Sepulchre to *Galilee*, from the Darkness of Sin, to the Light of Grace. *You have been*
one-

*one-while Darknefs : But now, I hope, you are Light in our Lord, * by the Grace of* ^{* Romans iii.} *your Easter Communion. Jefus of Nazareth, who was crucified, is rifen : He whom you feek is no more in his Sepulchre : He can no more put-up with the Society of the Dead. That he died, it was for once and no more : That He liveth, He liveth to God ; and That forever. For You then to live with him, you muft henceforth live, like Him, a Life of Newnefs ; a Life of Sanctity ; a Life all heavenly, all given to God. This is the only Means to drown the Terrors of Death, the greateft of our Miferies upon Earth, in that greateft of Consolations which the facred Miftery of our Divine Lord's Refurrection is big with ; the reasonable Hope of fharing in his Immortality : This is the fure Means of giving, on this Day which the Lord has made, Honour to Chrift, Pleafure to the Angels, Glory to God, and Joy to His Church : And by this Means You will reap to yourfelves an Eternity of Joy ; and ! and fuch a Joy, fays the Lord, as No-One fhall take from You.*

*O Children of Men then ; let me fay with the Pfalmift ! How long will you remain thus heavy of Heart ? Why do You delight in Vanity and feek a Lye ? * You want to* ^{* Pfalmiv.} *be happy ? And can you then expect to find that Happinefs in Emptinefs and*

Fiction? *Know, once for Good, that the Lord hath render his Holy-One wonderful,* * *on purpose, that, fixing your Admiration on him, he might settle your Hope* † *singularly* † *on him.* Does not your Saviour shew, in his blessed Resurrection, where you ought to seek your sovereign only Beatitude? Ah! seek it then *above*, where He is, and where alone That is: *Not upon Earth*, where He is not, nor consequently That can be. The Happiness You are forever in Search of is a real substantial Good. But ah! It is not to be found on Earth. *You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified? He is risen: He is not not here. He goes before you to Galilee:* He is gone before you to Heaven. There you shall see him: There you shall find him, and in him your only Happiness. To Heaven then, My Brethren, to Heaven, let us aspire. There it is We shall find, there it is we shall love, there it is we shall enjoy, a blissful Good; the Sight of which will never tire us, the Love of which will never be extinguish'd, the Enjoyment of which will never cloy us, the Glory of which will never end. O may our Souls henceforth, despising all besides, with all their Power and Affections cling to This! I beseech God: *In the Name, &c.*



SERMON



S E R M O N

O N

L O W S U N D A Y.

St. J O H N xx. 19.

JESUS came and stood in the Midst of his Disciples, and say'th to them: Peace be to you.



how strangely deluding is the World! O how unaccountably deluded are the Followers of the World! Horrid Fraud of That! Horrid Infatuation of This! Who would believe it, Christians? The World has found the Means to render Virtue odious: And GOD, with all his adorable Attributes, is not yet become amiable in the Sight of Worldlings! The World, with it's native Perfidy has taken Care to delineate Virtue in the lying Colours of a poor, oppressive, beggarly, austere and cruel

X x 2

Mistress,

Mistress, which, rich only in Spleen, has Nothing to reward it's Adherents with but Misery and Want. And O what a horrid jumble of forbidden Features do not Worldlings give to their Ideas of the God of Hosts ! They represent him to their Imagination as a Being extremely severe, unrelenting, furious, who is ever leveling with Sword in hand at the Destruction of his Servants ; who is always seeking his Diversion in their Miseries and sporting in their Distresses ; and whose Rigour is such as makes it but one and the same thing to give themselves up to God, and to give-up forever the Enjoyment of every Pleasure ! In short, there is no one Terror in Holy-Writ which they do not make use of to make the very Name of the Almighty terrifying. But let us discard this Phantom Idea of our God, this lying Picture of him, form'd out of all which our Fears and Ignorance or *Satan's* Malice could misrepresent him with, and form'd out of Nothing of all which is really like him. What ! Is there any thing after all of so horrible in God, as is believed by Some ? No, no : God has not any Cause of Horrors in him. He the Enemy of our Ease and Comfort ? He envious of our Peace and Joy ? Ah ! It is base ungrateful and perfidious Blasphemy. It is a grievous Outrage done to our good and gracious God barely to suspect him of being thus cruel or severe.

But

But how does not even He-himself effectually convince us of the contrary? Hear you not the enchanting Accents with which he labours to dispel all the fullen Clouds of our ill-grounded Diffidences, when, *standing in the Midst* of his Disciples, he saith: *Peace be with You?* See you not the sacred Wounds with which he purchased for you the Peace he profers You? That Peace is yours then for accepting. It is not therefore, like the fallacious Peace of Worldlings, ever in Reversion never in Possession. No, Beloved; on the Reverse. The Peace which God and JESUS have to give is certain and immediate. Whenever we find God We have found and gotten Possession of true Peace. O Christians! How long will you remain undetermin'd to this Truth! How long will you be froward and hesitate to seek this Peace which JESUS offers, this only Peace worth having? O that I might be so happy as to become this Day a successful Interpreter of JESUS's Words here cited to You! And why shall I not at least endeavour at it? Attend then, Beloved Christians, and be convinced of two Maxims as true as they are little understood. Whatever may be said, it is very certain:

- I. That Life is not worth possessing without Peace: *And*
- II. That, They seek Peace in vain who seek it out of God.

" O God, Thou Author of all Happi-
 " nefs and sacred Center of all Peace
 " which can be worth enjoying! O give
 " thy Servants that blest, that solid Quiet
 " which the World has not to give and
 " which is no where to be found but in
 " thyself. O finish to convince us that
 " this rude restless Earth is not the Place
 " where true Tranquility resides; that, our
 " Hearts no longer fixt on vain Pursuits,
 " may henceforth rise above the Joys of
 " this fallacious Life, to seek their only
 " true Repose in loving and exulting with
 " Thee."

I. It is not without Reason that the
 Angels who at the Birth of Christ were sent
 to denounce his Arrival on Earth, to the
 Shepherds, proclaim'd him to them under
 the Name of Peace. No, no: That Divine
 Lord from all Eternity was the great Me-
 diator and Lover of our Peace: Nay, as the
 great Apostle of the *Gentils* styles him, *He*
is our Peace itself, who hath made Both
One; that He may create the Two in himself
into one New Man, making Peace. * The
 chief End of his coming into this World,
 was to restore us to the true and solid
 Peace, which we had lost by pursuing the
 Peace of Sinners. Therefore did He set-
 out with making a perfect Reconciliation
 between God and Man, by uniting both
 Natures

* *Ephesians*
 ii.

Natures in one Hypostatic Union under his own sacred Personality. Therefore did He make Peace the chief Object of his Preachings and Practice. Therefore did He recommend it frequently in his Sermons to his Apostles. Therefore did He enjoin them to inculcate the Same to their Disciples. Therefore did He bequeath it to them as his last Legacy. And therefore does He now, after his Resurrection, offer to put them in Possession of it; if they will but apply to him for it. And no Wonder is it, that JESUS, who *came on Earth purposely that We may have Life and have it more abundantly*, * should be thus solicitous of ^{* St. John} our Peace, the only Property which can ^{x.} render Life a real Blessing. For as he himself bears Witness, The *Pacific* only are the true Children of God, and consequently the only Persons who can be deem'd effectually Blessed: Since the Almighty's chief Design in fixing us a while in this Life is, that, proving ourselves true and worthy Children of God while on Earth, by our truly Christian Pursuit of Peace amidst the many Struggles of our present Warfare, We may be lifted to the eternal Inheritance of Heirs to God and Coheirs with Christ in that immortal future State of blissful Triumph which He originally created us for. That Peace then, which may enable us to attain to This, is the

the only Blessing worth our living for. Nay, I say more: Life, without this Peace, cannot be worth possessing. For after all, to what a miserable Purpose shall we have lived, (if we may call it *living*) if, for Want of necessary Peace in this Life, we should be doom'd never to know a Minute's Peace in the Next. If, *I say*, it may be call'd *living*. For, with Me, it is a Doubt as yet unsolved: whether Existing in a State of constant Disquiet, be not rather better call'd a slow-consuming Death, a gradual Dissolution than a State of Life.

Peace in it's Self contains a kind of close Analogy with Providence, a kind of Providential Dignity. The World itself could not subsist without it. It is the mutual Harmony reigning between the Elements, which preserves It in it's actual Existence. Let but the mutual Concord between Air and Fire, and Earth and Water be dissolved; and strait the World shall be resolv'd into it's Mother *Chaos*. So let these Principles but war against One-another in the Human Frame, and natural Life grows sick; the Body wastes; and (if there be not Peace restored among the elemental Qualities of which his Body is compos'd) the Man must die: How is not every Private Family and every Common-Weal disturb'd and hurried into Dissolution; if Peace preside not in the Midst of it, to exert a Providential Care
of

of it's Existence? Wherefore says Christ:
*Every Kingdom divided against itself shall
 be made desolate and every City or House*
divided against itself shall not stand. * Thus <sup>*S. Matth.
xii.</sup> too is it impossible for Human Life to be
 enjoy'd in any rational Consideration where
 inward Peace resides not in the Heart to
 make Life worth possessing?

This is a Truth so obvious to every Eye
 that All Mankind appear convinced of it.
 And therefore All cry-out for Peace; All
 yearn after it, sigh after it, run after it.
 And all the Subject of the universal Toils
 and Sweats and Wars and Contests and
 Pursuits, which occupy the Thoughts and
 Wishes Time and Talents of Mankind,
 what is it, but to grasp One Minute's true
 Enjoyment of Tranquillity, that only
 Blessing worth their living for. Why
 does the Miser carefully hoard-up his
 useless Wealth; still toil for more; and,
 with an Abstemiousness which Hermits
 would find Difficulty to exceed, deny him-
 self even a scanty Taste of all the Fruits of
 a laborious Industry? Why cark and care
 and work and gain and have and starve in
 the very Midst of Plenty, but that He hopes
 in Time to accumulate such Plenty as may
 reward his yet insatiable Cupidity with final
 Peace? But does he ever reach to the Pos-
 session of the darling Object? Ah no! His
 Avarice encreasing with his Wealth, his

Wants out-growing his enormous Acquisitions, his Cares redoubled with his Heaps, keep him forever on the Rack of sullen Doubt; torture him perpetually with Dreads of losing what he has and Eagerness of adding to his fruitless Stores; and, wringing his wretched Heart with gloomy Jealousies of Every-One he knows, or Servant or Relation, or Enemy or Friend, fill his Imagination with ten thousand Terrors which rob him of his Peace by Day and even of his Rest by Night. Every Word affords him Subject of Suspicion: Every Look is Matter for Anxiety: Every sudden Noise shall make him start: Every Interval of Silence throws him into Panics. The Day, He thinks, may treacherously betray his Hoards; and Dusk, he apprehends, may favour Treachery and Theft. In short, abroad, at-home, in Company, alone, awake or slumbering, his Mind and Heart are ever in a Flutter; and, ever on the Wing in the fatiguing Search of Peace, He every-day moves wider from it than before: And why? Ah! the Reason is too evident. He seeks for Peace where it is not. He seeks it in abundance of Wealth: He seeks it in sinful Attachments. In a word, he seeks it in Wickedness: Whereas

* *there is no Peace to the Wicked, says the Lord.*

* *Isaiah*
xlvi. &
lvii

What

What, think you, Beloved, are the Wanton and Luxurious in Search of; but Peace? Why spend their Patrimony, waste the Bloom of Life, destroy their Health, expose their Fortune, Reputation, and Liberty and Souls in Riotous Diversions, toilsome Amusements, and the most fatiguing Dissipations; but that they hope to find, one day, a lasting endless Peace in the Possession of the empty false and flattering Pleasures they pursue? And do they find it ever? Alas the contrary is evident in the Diseases Losses of Limbs, of Substance, Reputation, Ease and Quiet, which in general attend inordinate Enjoyment. What Hazards, Labours, Anxieties, and Cares and Toils, and rude Fatigues, with Disappointments, Perplexities, Vexations and Mis-haps, attend the bare Pursuit of sensual Pleasures of every Sort! And when attain'd, (if that be ever) what speedy Loathings follow! How soon does Spleen, Fatigue, and gloomy Disappointment and Remorse succeed! Not to mention the Shame, Disgrace, Resentment, Penury, Disquiet, Sickness and innumerable Catastrophes, which oftentimes ensue. And whence comes it that Peace forever flees the Embraces of these industrious Searchers, but that their Industry is misapplied? But ah! Where is the Wonder, that their Pursuits of Peace should lead them wide of it; when they

are seeking it in every Path but where it may be overtaken? They seek their Peace in earthly Pleasures: They seek it in profane Attachments: To speak more plainly, they seek it in the Paths of Wickedness; and therefore never find it. For, *There is no Peace to the Wicked says the Lord.*

Tell me, Ambitious Mortals; Have you ever yet been able to procure one distant Sight of Peace with all your Labours and Sollicitudes? And yet what Diligence, what Study, what Toils or what Attendance have you spared, to gain this Post, to grasp that Power, to obtain this other Title Dignity or Pre-eminence? And have all These together ever help'd you to one Minute's Quiet? Not in the Pursuit, at least. For O what a deal of thinking, working, walking, waiting, talking, cringing, has it not cost you to solicit your Promotion among the Great! How often have you applied and been repulsed! How often applied again and been dismiss'd with empty-handed Hopes; but not without a Heart brimful of Doubt Disgust and Rage of Disappointment! What Insults, in a word, what Treacheries, what servil painful and undue Submissions, on your Side: What Grievances, Affronts and Insolences, on the Part of Those whose Interest you solicited, have you been forced to wipe off your sweating reddening Brow, for fear of disobliging this Man in Power or that Favorit,

Favourit, lest they should put a Bar to your Pursuit! No Matter: You have gain'd your Point at last. But has it help'd you to an Intercourse with Peace? Ah no! The Post enjoy'd, the Power Pre-eminence or Dignity obtain'd, strait is the former Ambition changed into a greater, an Ambition to rise yet higher: And with the encreasing Passion, your Anxiety encreases. O what Fears! What Doubts! What Circumspections, not to lose the Ground already gain'd! What Study, Labour and Contrivance, to gain that loftier Eminence! What Jealousies! What Envy! What Hatreds! What Grudges gnaw you, at the Sight of this Competitor! What Fury swells you with Aversion from that Other who is, or seems, in your Way! How are you torne, for ever on the Rack of Restlessness, amidst a jarring Tumult of unruly Passions, of Hope, Despair, Presumption, Diffidence, Ambition and Disdain! And yet forsooth you still persist in the eager Chase of Peace; and wonder that you do not find it? Ah! How should you? You, who are seeking it in Power Pomp and earthly Vanities: You who are seeking it in Wickedness, how can you hope to find it; when *There is no Peace to the Wicked, says the Lord?*

You, O Revengeful! You, O implacably Unmerciful! You, who blinded to all Light of Grace and Reason, seek your Satisfaction
in

in cherishing inveterate Hatreds within your Breasts; in the Destruction of your Adversary's Fame and Peace and Life; in the Subversion of whole Families, to reach at One obnoxious Person; in the intire Desolation of your Brethren's Substance, Honour, Virtue, Quiet, Blood and Soul, for every little Opposition they have made against your lawless Attempts! Do you hope to open to yourselves the Gates of Peace with Pistols, Swords and murderous Instruments, adorn'd, gilt, beautified and finely polish'd, only to make your Cruelties more pompously destructive? No no: Be rather assured that the Disturbances of Peace are not the Means to purchase Peace. From Heaven, *methinks*, I hear St. *Bernardin* bespeak you thus: " Ah! " Revengful Christians! Whenever I have " found my Blood begin to boil with In- " dignation at some Injury received, I ever " thought it the shortest way to Peace, to " carry that Injury to the Cross of JESUS " and there expose it at my Redeemer's " Feet. And so far was I from being " deceived in my Hopes, that, That very " Injury when bathed in my Redeemer's " Blood, has served me like a Master-Key, " to pass unstay'd unhinder'd to the inner- " most Recesses of internal Peace." But ah Revengful! Which of you all can say as much of your vindictive Measures? What Peace can all your bloody Instruments and Schemes

Schemes afford you, in the Pursuit of Vengeance; while, every Passion of your Souls in Fury, You are breathing Nothing but Revenge and Slaughter? What torturing Disquiets can the Prospect of your vengeful Malice give to Him, at whom your Hate is level'd, greater and more horrid than yourselves are previously tormented with, while actually projecting it? And where you do succeed to rid your Hatred of an obnoxious Person; are You the nearer to the Reach of Peace? O the mighty Glory you have to boast of, that, like a Toad or Scorpion, you have poison'd to Death the Rest or Fame, or Happiness of a Brother! O the mighty Satisfaction, for a Tyger or a Basilisk, that You have drain'd the Blood of Your Fellow Creature! O the mighty Comfort to have robb'd a Human Image of the Deity, of Life; to have plunged perhaps into eternal Flames a Soul redeem'd with the invaluable Blood of JESUS CHRIST! Yes: You are mighty likely to enjoy true Peace, when void of Grace, when circled-round and inwardly possess'd with guilty Terrors of God's just Vengeance impending over your Heads; of human public Justice ever at your Heels: When forced to wander Vagabonds, like *Cain*, without a Place of Safety upon Earth; when frighted by your Guilt at every Shadow you behold; when, Night and Day incessantly tormented by
insufferable

insufferable Remorses of the Conscience, your future Hell shall be anticipated by a present Hell within you? Ah Self-deluding Mortals! Yet your Aim is Peace? But alas you seek it where it is not. You seek it in mere Discord: You seek it, to be plain, in Wickedness: And therefore well may you not find it. *For there is no Peace to the Wicked, says the Lord.*

“ But! Plenty, *You'll say*, is a Blessing,
 “ and God has declared it Such. The
 “ Pleasures of Life may be enjoy'd with-
 “ out Guilt; and therefore may be pursued
 “ with Innocence. Power and Pre-emi-
 “ nence may enable us to do Good. And
 “ Justice requires us to make a Distinction
 “ between the Worthy and the Unworthy,
 “ by rewarding the Former and punishing
 “ the Latter.” All this is true, Christians;
 but no-ways contradictory to what I have
 said. Plenty, Riches, Pleasures, Power,
 Dignity, Esteem, are Blessings all, when
 pursued without Guilt, and possess'd without
 Attachment; but otherwise are Curses of
 our making. Punishment of Criminals is a
 Duty as obligatory as Reward of Merit,
 where all private Rancour and Resentment
 are removed. What then? The inordinate
 Pursuit of All or Any-One of These has
 not the Power to procure us one single
 Minute's true Content. “ No? How comes
 “ it then, that So many Men of Wealth,
 “ of

" of Pleasure, of Power, of Prerogative,
 " enjoy such ease of Life? Whence comes
 " it that So Many Men, who are daily
 " watchful in the Punishment of such as
 " merit it, are ever in profound Tranquillity?
 " View but their Countenance; and how
 " Serene they appear! Harken but to their
 " Conversation; and Who so happy, but
 " must envy their peaceful Situation?" Ah
 Christians! It is all Deceit: Illusion all.
 Whatever the World may think; Whatever
 Worldlings may say; believe me: The
 Peace of Worldlings is mere Self-Imposi-
 tion. They do but heal externally their
 inward Gangrenes of Discontent, *saying,*
Peace, Peace; and there is no Peace: * *Jerem.*
 vi, & viii.

And That for Want of seeking their Peace,
 fixing their Repose in God, where alone
 It may be found. Can it then be doubted
 but that, without a greater, surer, more real
 Tranquillity, Life can have no Enjoyment?

What in Life can there be so de-
 sirable as Peace? That is the Blessing which
 all Men covet above all other Blessings,
 and chiefly pray and want and strive to
 obtain. It is the Sister of Joy and the
 Mother of Society. It links Mankind toge-
 ther; It peoples Cities, Counties, King-
 doms; establishes their Commerce with all
 foreign Nations; and makes them happy in
 themselves. Peace is the chief Establisher
 of Good Order and Salutory Laws. It gives

Virtue it's free Exercise, smiles upon Industry and greatly Favours all Arts and Sciences to flourish. In few words, Peace is the Well-Spring of all the Good the Earth can Promise or afford us. And Wars are waged for Nothing more than to attain to This. Yet is this Peace which Men are so solicitous to acquire, far wide, if We consider it barely in itself, of That true Peace which Christ came down on Earth to give. "No, no: *says Christ*, if
 " This be the Peace you seek, you'll never
 " find it but in the Name, *Peace Peace*,
 " you may call it; but you will find that,
 " as my Prophet says, *There is no Peace*.
 " Nor am I come to bring a Peace like
 " This: *I came not to bring Peace but the*

*St. Matth
 x.

" *Sword*, * I came to destroy the external
 " Peace which Worldlings are contending
 " for, to establish in it's Place the Peace of
 " God, that only Peace which can deserve
 " the Name of Peace; That only Peace
 " worth living for; That Peace of Heart,
 " which may be found in God alone. And
 " even That Peace which I now give you:

† St. John
 xiv.

" *For not as the World giveth it, do I give*
 " *to You.*" †

II. Know then, O Christians, that the Peace of the World is not the Peace You ought to desire: Nay It is no Peace for You; nor worth your wishing or possessing. The
 Peace.

Peace of the World, at best, is but a treacherous Dream; and rather leads Mankind to Sin and Sorrow, than to Virtue and Repose. It may indeed procure you Plenty and Safety: But then It too generally tempts you to make bad use of that Plenty and Safety, to the soothing your Appetites and giving the Reins to your Passions. It may link Men together: But then it oftner cements them into Factions than into Friendships. It may establish Common-Weals: But in augmenting the Number of a City's Inhabitants, too often does it also contribute to the Encrease of the Number of vicious Ones; and, while It affords a Legislature the Leisure to make wholesome Laws, It emboldens the whole Nation insolently to violate them, with Wantonness, Injustice, and Arrogance. If It favours Arts and Sciences and Industry; it favours still more the Ignorance, Indolence and Vices of the slothful Majority: If it seconds the Interests of Traffic, it also promotes Avarice, Fraud, Imposition and Perfidy: And where it introduces the Blessing of Plenty, it is sure to make Way for the Curfes of Luxury, Riot and Libertinism. Ah! What Peace can this be for you to pursue, Beloved Christians, which while It banishes temporal Calamity from the Public, introduces the most dreadful Calamities of Spirit among them, by lulling Mankind into a Lethargy.

of Grace and a fatal Oblivion of God? In fact, What is the Use to which you generally Apply this Object of your eagerest Pursuits? Is it to give Glory to God in the more fervent frequent Application of your Souls to the Praises and Homage of his heavenly Majesty: Or not rather to do Honour to the World in the safer Attachment to the Pleasures It deceives you with? Is it, that you may, with greater Intensity of fraternal Charity, devote yourselves to the Service of God's Images, your Neighbours, in the Practice of Works of Mercy spiritual and corporal: Or not rather, that you may indulge your own Self-love with greater Surety in the Gratification of your sensual Appetites? Ah! If you will but be ingenuous you must own, that the Use You make of that Peace which the World has to give is not the Sanctification of your Souls, but the Ease and Contentment of your Senses Flesh and Passions.

Now give me leave to tell you, Dear-loved Audience, This is not the Peace of JESUS CHRIST. He came not to bring into the World a *Peace* of the Senses, *but the Sword* of Victory over the Senses. His Peace is not a Peace of the Sense: It has Nothing common with the Sense: It is infinitely superior to the Reach of Sense, as the Apostle of the *Gentils* expresses it in the Epistle to the PHILIPPIANS, * where he says,

* Chap. iv.

says, *The Peace of God, which surpasseth every Sense, keep your Hearts and your Intelligences in CHRIST JESUS.* This is the true Peace of Christians: And This preserves every Heart, into which It gains admittance, from the Love of the Earth and all which earthly: It fills the Soul with pious Sentiments and holy Affections; and lifts it to a true Intelligence of Spirit. It consists in a perfect Serenity of Mind and Tranquillity of Heart. It banishes all gloomy Doubts, Suspicions and Despondences; removes all Craft, Deceit and Artifice; and gives the Soul a blest Simplicity of Spirit, but a Simplicity which far exceeds the Wisdom of the Earthly Wise, and to the Prudence of the Serpent, adds a Dove-like Innocence. It silences the noisy Passions; quiets the disorderly Tumults of fleshly Affections; and, suppressing all Extravagance of Desire or Attachments entertains an ineffable Contentment in the Breast it takes Possession of. It is the Parent of Love, but of a Love all pure, all chaste, all heavenly: It is the Sister of Charity: And the sweet Effect of that triumphing Grace, which, through the Divine Assistance join'd with our free Co-operation, leads us on to Victory in the rude War we are engaged in with the World the Devil and our Flesh.

It

It is a Maxim of Philosophers, and a very just One, that the same Principle which is the Cause of Motion, is the Cause of Quiet: The Heart of Man then, which is under God the Prime Agent of every Motion within him, must also be the first Principle of his Rest. The Heart alone is capable of giving Rest to the Members It has set in Motion: Sole Arbitrer of our Pain or Pleasure, The Heart has the Power at Discretion to afford us Peace or War. The Peace which, terminating superficially on the Countenance, penetrates not to the inmost Foldings of the Heart, is but a mere deceitful Mask of Peace. It is nearly a-kin to those unrefreshing Slumbers which the Sick are often times reduced to court from the foreign Assistance of soporiferous Draughts: Which, for want of those refreshing Recruits of Vigour which the dispirited Brain is wont to receive from the moistening Effluvia of the Stomach, instead of comforting it, serve only to tantalize, teize and enervate it the more. Christian Peace will always insinuate itself to the very Center of the Heart of every Man whom It affects: And brightening it, filling it, and leaving within no Want ungratified, no one Desire unfulfill'd, will thence disuse itself to every Feature, through every Pore. Ah! Let but the Dissimulation of affected Peace be taken-off from all those smiling Countenances

Countenances which seem (and only seem) so enviously serene: And how soon shall we not see that the Peace of Worldlings is a Peace and no Peace! How soon shall We be fully convinced, that, since all external Quiet which flows not from a true Serenity of Heart is but a modish Lye, a deluding Counterfeit of Peace; true Peace of Heart is no where to be sought or found but in a serious zealous firm Adherence to the Will of God!

To see a *Persian* Monarch amidst his Nobles gayly seated at a splendid Entertainment, smiling, laughing, playing, jesting, sporting and exciting Mirth in all the chearful Company around him, who would not think him in Possession of a perfect Peace of Heart? But! Is he so? Not at all: His Peace is all Grimace, mere Shew, rank Affectation all. Three words unknown to him written on the Wall is full enough to change this glittering Scene of Mirth into a Fit of Spleen Despondency and Horror, * And can it be? Can it? Yes it can be: It has been.

* *Daniel*
v.

Ah! True is it, very true, that all the Smiles of Fortune, the Power, Riches, Greatness, Splendor and Pleasures of this World are merely outward; sit tottering on the superficial Margin of the Sense; and never gain Admittance to the Heart of Man; which is by Nature too capacious to be fill'd with Aught but boundless Happiness: And therefore

fore cannot feel from those mere counterfeited Joys any thing above the tantalizing Sense of what It wants, the Sense of wanting that sole satiating Bliss which will not couple with it's Counterfeit. The Bliss then, the Peace which should be only sought and can be only found in GOD, is the only Content which can procure an Entrance into human Hearts. This indeed not only enters but replenishes the Soul; not only fills it but dilates it; not only dilates it but absorbs it. And while the fickle, empty, false, deluding Peace of Worldlings toys but about the outmost Surface; This steals to the very Center and takes a free Possession of the Whole,

Ah Christians! If then, as it appears and as the experienced St. *Augustin* says, "They, whose Peace and Happiness is center'd in Truth and not in the Lye of Earthly Vanity, are Partakers of the very Felicity of God;" Who can doubt but, --- Who but must conclude, --- that the true Christian, who after the Example of his Divine Master spurns at, renounces and tramples on the false Peace and Joys of the World, must enjoy a plenteous endless Ocean of every pure unpall'd Delight? Ah My God! It is even so: After all, great and unspeakable are the transporting Sweets which Thou art wont to deal to those Souls who seek their Peace alone in loving Thee. So great is it,
so

so ineffable, that, as an Angelic Father of thy Church teaches, the Joys dispensed by thy liberal Hand, to the blessed Souls who serve Thee upon Earth, are a Foretaste, nay a Portion, of those exstastic Delights which the Blessed enjoy who triumph in the Love of Thee amidst the Glory of Heaven. Ah! Well then might the transported Psalmist cry-out, after a Taste of this anticipated Beatitude: *O how great is the Multitude of thy Sweetness, which Thou hast hidden for Those who fear Thee!* * O Sweetness indeed * *Psalm xxx.* surpassing every Sweet! O precious Property of Those who seek their Peace in God: Not only to gather in the Flower of their Hopes, the Promises of Fruit, but the very budding Fruit itself!

What shall I say to You, Christians? In the Delight which God transfuses into the Souls of Those who fix their Peace in him, He not only consoles them with the solid Hopes of a fair Paradise in Reversion, but even feeds them with the First Fruits of Beatitude in a Paradise already begun. Will You then, after all, be such Traitors to your own Interests as to renounce a Sea of unutterable real Delight to quench your Thirst with a few muddy Drops of fancied Satisfaction? Nay to drown yourselves in an oozy Puddle of corrupted corrupting Pleasures? Where is the Wretch so senseless, who, thirsting after Plenty of Refresh-

ment, would renounce a Fountain for a Drop? No where: No where, says St. *Augustin*: "No One prefers a Drop to a Fountain." Why then, Beloved, should You be so treacherous to yourselves, You who are so indefatigably eager for Peace, as, for the sake of a few mere Drops of false precarious dangerous Content to renounce an eternal Spring of true and certain Peace and Safety, Bliss and Glory?

If you wish for Peace in earnest, seek It where It may be found. Seek it not in Avarice, Ambition, Luxury, Sin and Folly: For *there is no Peace for the Wicked says the Lord*. No, seek it in God and you shall find it. Seek it in believing, serving, loving and obeying him. Seek it in Christ, who *is our Peace* itself. To conclude, seek not the Peace of the Flesh, the Peace of Senses: But seek that Peace, which Jesus this Day gives to his Disciples and gives, through them, to You, in this consoling Gospel: *Peace be to you*: A Peace which infinitely transcends That which the Flesh the World and Senses have to give. I therefore in my Saviour's Name shall once more recommend it to You. *And may the Peace of God, which surpasseth every Sense, keep your Hearts and Intelligences in Christ Jesus*: I beseech &c. *In the Name, &c.*

SERMON



S E R M O N

ON THE

Second SUNDAY after EASTER.

St. JOHN x. 12.

The Good Shepherd giveth his Life for his Sheep. But the Hireling, whose own the Sheep are not, see'th the Wolf coming and leaveth the Sheep and flee'th.



HERE are then Hirelings in the Church of God? — Yes: It cannot be denied: There are too many by the whole Number. Yet, thanks to Thee, all gracious Spouse and Ruler of thy Church, that Number is but small compared to the Good Shepherds Thou has't given to it. And You, O Catholics, have reason to return your Saviour Thanks, this Day, for giving you the Marks to know them by asunder. But then yours will be all the Blame henceforth; if you mistake in

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your

your Discernment, after so lively a Description as he has given you of Both. *The Good Shepherd*, your Saviour tells you, *gives-up* his Life *for his Flock*. *The Hireling gives-up* the Lives of his Flock for Himself. The *Former*, wholly intent to feed and cherish his Sheep, breathes only for Them: His Time, his Toils, his Thoughts, his Health, his very Relaxations, nay his Life, are all devoted to their Safety. While on the contrary the *Latter* attentive to their Fleece alone, pampers them only to Destruction; and, finish'd-Traitor-like, cherishes and soothes them only with the Bait of Ruin, as fatted Victims destin'd to fall a Sacrifice, when Time shall serve, to his own selfish Purposes. And therefore is He ever ready to desert and leave them on the Unguard, the Moment Danger seems to perk him in the Face. Now such as These, Few as they are, there must be. For *it is necessary*, says Christ, *that Scandals should come*: *Tho' Woe to him by whom Scandal cometh*. Yes: Scandals are necessary that *the Elect may be made manifest*, by persevering in their Fidelity amidst such fiery Trials.

That some Offences are given then by heedless Pastors to the Laity is undeniable: But then, let Prejudice subside and Truth take Place, it will appear that many more Offences are taken by the Laity than are really given. Hence is the Cause of so much
Disrespect

Disrespect in Laymen to their Clergy : And hence it is, that even the Best of These gather so little Fruit from all their Zeal and Labour for the Good of Those. O Christians ! Inconsiderate Christians ! You, who are so easily and often scandalized at Priests, search but the Source of your Disgusts, and you will find that Scandal taken is not always Scandal given. Be honest to yourselves as well as to Them ; and you'll be forced to own, that Ninety-nine at least of every hundred Scandals which you take at Them, owe their Beginning to some Corruption in your Heads or Hearts. This is a Truth I have long proposed to lay before you, for your Sakes more than Theirs. And no Time fairer than the present, when the Gospel of the Day invites you to adhere to the Good Shepherd, and cautions you to avoid the Hireling. For, if, heedless of the Instructions which it gives you to discern them, Each from the other, you blend them with a like Contempt ; what Benefit can you reap from Either ? Whereas, with proper Circumspection, you have it in your Power to render Both of sovereign Use to you.

To convince you then, Beloved, that I say no more than I can prove, I shall now proceed to consider Four very material Points yet unconsider'd with regard to the Priesthood :

I. The

- I. The Causes in general of the many Scandals taken by the Laity at their Pastors :
- II. The Danger of being easily scandalized at your Pastors :
- III. The Advantages of not being easily scandalized at them : *And*
- IV. The Means of reaping Benefit even from such Pastors as may give You but too much room for taking Scandal.

“ O Thou Inspirer of all Truth ! Direct
 “ this Tongue to utter the bold Maxims of
 “ thy own dictating, and utter them with-
 “ out Offence and without servil Fear of
 “ giving it. Open the Minds and Hearts of
 “ this mistaken People to take in Christian
 “ Part the Doctrins which Thou bid’st me
 “ preach. And O ! forbid the infernal Enemy
 “ to overspread the salutary Seed, which I
 “ shall sow, with the pernicious Cockle of
 “ a false Construction. ”

I. Could I consent to act the Hireling ;
 had I my own Tranquillity in View, re-
 gardless of your Safety ; I should rather
 sooth you in the dangerous Dream You are
 in, than attempt to awake you from so
 profound a Sleep, at the Hazard of being
 crush’d by the unreasonable Resentment of
 Some of You. What Concern is it of a
 Man’s, who lives by you, who is honour’d
 by

by you, nay indulged by You; or what Ends can He propose to himself in directing you, how you should behave with regard to Others. So says worldly Prudence: So says that Craft, which your mistaken Prepossession is so often apt to pay your Pastors the Compliment of. But what say you O Honesty and Truth? What say'st Thou, my God? Can the faithful Pastor, leave his People a Prey to dangerous Sleep and see the Enemy Man sowing the Tares of Prejudice amidst their Pasture? Can a Good Shepherd leave his Flock a Prey to the devouring Wolf for Fear of rousing them, tho' at the Peril of their Peevishness? No, no: Thou has't said, and it must be so, *The Good Shepherd gives up his Life for his Sheep.* O make me then a truly faithful Shepherd! Rather let me, at this Altar, resign my useless Breath, than live to leave this Flock of thine a Prey to fatal Prejudice, through any dastard Fear of their Displeasure. Rather than live to be a Hireling, let me expire while yet a Pastor in my Wishes. For ah my God! how shall I act the Pastor now? How shall I treat a Sore so tender? How shall I act to remove one Scandal and not leave a greater? Let me then plead with *Jeremiah.* *Ah! ah! ah!* O Lord God! Behold I cannot speak; for I am a Child in human Wisdom. What say'st Thou, Lord? Say not I am a Child: for to all Things, to which I shall send Thee, thou shalt

shal't go: And all Things, whatsoever I shall
 *Jerem. i. *command Thee, Thou shalt speak.* * But to
 what purpose Lord; if false Prevention
 should interfere to misapply my Words?
 For behold Lord I am less than a Child in
 the Eyes of modern Christians; a Priest, a
 Man who by his Function is imbibed with
 Craft. No matter: *Be not afraid of their*
Face, because I am with Thee to deliver
 † *Ibid.* *Thee.* † But. ah! Once more, my God: If
 Thou deliver me; how shall I deliver Them?
 What Weight can my Words have to re-
 move their Disaffection to their Pastors, when
 I myself am One; and therefore seemingly
 concern'd in the Advice I give? But how,
 my Heart, art Thou concern'd? Thou art
 supported, nay honour'd by them beyond
 what thou can'st merit? Thou then art
 quite unconcern'd on any Side. Go then,
 says the Lord: (methinks) *Behold I have*
this Day appointed Thee over the Gentils
and over Kingdoms, that thou may'st pluck-up
and destroy, and waste and dissipate and
 † *Ibid.* *build and plant.* †

Look ye then, Christians: To reap Be-
 nefit from what I shall say in my follow-
 ing Discourse, you must have recourse to
 Abstraction. Try therefore to forget a-while
 the Man in the Preacher, the Friend in
 the Missioner, and the Sinner in the Shep-
 herd. Imagin not, that you are listening to
 the Person, who has visited you at your
 Houses;

Houses; eaten and drank at your Tables; smiled and been chearful with Some of you; wept and been mournful with Others; and studied to be all to All of you. Think not, in a word, that you are hearing the Man who wants preaching to as much as any of you, but rather that you are hearing a Prophet; nay, more than a Prophet, a Disciple of Christ, a Priest and Apostle; nay, more than All, Christ himself. For *He who hears You, hears Me*, says Christ to the Meanest of us all. And This I promise you: I will say Nothing to you but what I have a Warrant for from Him, and what He-himself would confirm, if visibly upon Earth. To proceed then:

One capital vulgar Error which I observe to run through all Considerations in Life, is the ungenerous Imputation of Evils in Particulars, to general Corruption; while the Excellencies of the Whole are only imputed to the Merit of Some certain Particulars. Let any single Limb in a Man be disorder'd, the whole Body is said to be out of Order; when perhaps the Rest of the Members have no other Share in the Evil than Compassion creates. But when is the Health of a Person ever imputed to more than the faithful Performance of their Functions in the several Members. No, We are always ingenious in propagating ungenerous Inferences: Would we were so

in the Reverse! Let a Body of Men excell ever-so in commendable Pursuits, we forget the Praises due to their Conjunction and only remember to refund the general Merit into the Excellencies of the Individuals of which that Body is composed. But no sooner does One of those Individuals degenerate from the Virtues of the Rest than the Whole is made accountable for what the Whole disapproves and condemns. Thus let the Majority of Priests, adhering to that Sanctity which their Function dictates and inspires them with, give ever such edifying Proofs of their Virtue and Zeal; what Honour does all their Piety reflect to the Priesthood? None in the least. It is not the Priesthood you reverence as pious, but the Men. In short, they are not good Men, because they are Priests: But the Men are good and therefore act well, tho' Priests. But let One of those Priests, whom you esteem as good Men, appear to be otherwise; the Scene is immediately reversed. The whole Priesthood is condemn'd for one evil or indiscreet Man, who has intruded into, or misbehaved in it; and it is not because he was a sinful Man, that he has acted amiss; but because he was a Priest. O ungenerous, uncharitable, unchristian Inference! Nay, unjust and cryingly unjust I may call it. For surely, if the eminent Worth of the Majority of Priests may not reflect

reflect Honour to the Function in general ; how merciless an Injustice is it not to load it with the Contempt due to the ill-conduct of a Few ? And yet how general a Practice is not This, with the Christians of our Age ! What wonder is it then, that so Many, unjustly scandalized at their Good Shepherds, for the Mis-behaviour of Hirelings, either fall from the Church into Schism and Heresy, or live in it with unprofitable Lukewarmness ? How should it be otherwise, when, as the Prophet foretold, *The Face of our Lord hath divided them, he will not add to regard them : Because they have not revered the Faces of his Priests ? **

** Jerem.
Lament. iv.*

The Generality of the Laity, with regard to their Pastors, either wholly forget the Man or wholly forget the Priest. If they take a whimsical Liking to One, they immediately raise him in their Imagination to an Angel, to a Creature impeccable, confirm'd in Grace ; nay more, a Something without Temptations and even without Passions ; and, forgetting the Man in the Priest, either cringe him into Vanity, or feed him into Avarice, or court him into Levity ; and therefore is it, that, when the Frailty of his Nature ever so little undeceives them, all their former exorbitant Esteem sinks into as unjust a Contempt : Every little Foible of his is magnified into a real Fault : And his most inoffensive Words and Actions

are made a Matter of Scandal. Whereas, would they but remember the Man as well as the Priest; they must expect to discover Foibles in him, and those Foibles would not lessen that Esteem which alone can render him of Use to them. Because they would naturally reflect, that God chose not for their Pastors Angels, but Men; and sinful Men: Men, who, from the Frailty of their own Nature, from the Stubbornness of their own Passions, and the Refractoriness of their own Tempers, might learn to compassion the Weaknesses of their Flock.

If they remember'd the Man as well as the Priest; they would remember to apply to him not only when They want his spiritual Assistance, but even when He wants their temporal Aid. They would remember, that *Every Labourer is worthy of his Hire*; and He, who has no Subsistence but from the Altar, ought to live by the Altar. And yet how many worthy Priests are there not probably now starving in this great City; who, perhaps, take more Pains than I and some Others who are better subsisted! And what can this be attributed to, but to the uncharitable Prejudices of Some of the Laity, even Such as want neither the Purse nor the Soul to give Charity. "A
 " worthy Pastor in Want! Is it possible?
 " But why don't he make his Case known?"
 Alas Christians! There lies his Misfortune,
 Ho

He is reduced to suffer, because he mayn't speak : And He may not speak, lest he should be reduced to suffer more. " But " how then shall we relieve him ; if he does " not speak ? " And how shall he support his Dignity ; if he does ? What do Those get, who reveal their Wants to you, but the Character and Contempt of mercenary Hirelings ? If a Priest be a real Hireling ; and yet artful enough to cloke his mercenary Broad-Hints with the flimsy Cover of an affected Disinterestedness ; how ready are All to glut his Avarice with Profusion ! But let the good Shepherd, with honest Openness, declare a Necessity ; how is he branded with the Title of Mercenary, of Hireling of Beggar ? In short, the Major Part of Christians are fondly blind to the most glaring Objects and clear-sighted only to Misapprehension. They cherish the Dust in their Eyes, not to observe the Mercenary, who serves them only for what he can get, and only while getting it. But see double, when they behold the Pastor, whose disinterested Care is the only Cause which reduces him to sue to them for Assistance. Their Pastor must be ever at their Beckon, or he neglects them ; no Pains he takes is thought supererogatory. No : All is his Duty ; and it is well, if, after doing all for them, he is thought to have fulfill'd his Duty. But when is it ever thought by Them a Duty
to

to make any temporal Return to his spiritual Assistance? If, generously regardless of himself, he discovers no Wants; but, trusting wholly to their Bounty to prevent them, he applies wholly to deserving that Bounty by his Affiduity for their Good; they suppose him rich, or pronounce him proud, and devote him to all the Hardships of the most ungenerous Neglect. What wonder then is it; if such a Man is too frail by nature to withstand the rudest Shocks of a severe Penury? What wonder, *I say*, is it to see him fall into such Meannesses as must be degrading to the Dignity of a Pastor, offensive to his Flock and disgraceful to the Church in general? But whose is the chief Fault: The Priest's, whose natural Disposition perhaps is diametrically opposed to such Meannesses; or Yours, in urging him to such an Extremity by your Neglect? If all the Mischief lay in the Disgrace of the Priest; the Evil would not be so great, but it might be repair'd. It has been necessary, and therefore might be again, *for one Man*, to bleed, *to die for the People*. The Ease, the Credit, the Safety, the Life of a Priest is not much. Let him be a Sacrifice to the utmost Distress; could any Benefit accrue from it. But why give-up a Priest, who still is a Man and invested with all the Weaknesses of a Man? Why, *I say*, give him up to the Trial of Want, a Trial which re-
quires

quires the Heroism of a Something more than Man to resist? Especially when he cannot fall into any Evil without dragging Legions after him. And how shall you prevent his falling a Prey to the Temptation of Want, but by preventing his Necessities before he asks you? For if you wait till he asks you; you may wait till too late. Ask you he may not, lest you think him mercenary. What then has he to do? Steal or circumvent? That would be a double Crime in him. Shall he work? That would equally offend this nicer Age. Which of you all would forbear being scandalized; if a Director of yours, following the Example of *St. Paul*, and earning his Bread at the Sweat of his Brow the better to preach the Gospel freely to you, should turn Tent-maker, Taylor, Shoe-maker, or what you please? How then shall he be preserved from Want or the Temptations incident to it, but by your generous Assistance before he asks or even hints a Want of it? And yet how Few are there generous enough to reflect on This? And to such Neglects we may impute a great Part of the Scandals which happen to the Laity from the Weaker Part of the Priesthood. I say This for Any of this Flock; but for Those of any Others, who may be here by chance. For 'tis with Pleasure I reflect, more for your Sakes than my own, on that chearful Generosity which renders

renders you above any Reproaches of this Sort : Since if your Pastors have any room for Complaints against you ; it is rather for your Tenderness to them than any Neglect of them. But let the Wanderers here present lay their Hands on their Hearts and say : Which of them all give their Pastors occasion to say the like to them with any Truth ? Which of them all ever thinks of a Pastor's Support, so far from actually providing for it ? In short, Christians of mine I hope, I may say This without Suspicion of Flattery : Were all Christians as generous to their Shepherds as you are to yours ; all Shepherds (it is to be hoped) would exceed, at least One of yours, in Merit. Their would not so Many fall from the Church, nor so Many of Those, who remain in it, live remissly as they do. But the Menace of God, by the Mouth of his Prophet, is verified in them : *The Face of our Lord hath divided them, He will not add to regard them : Because they have not revered the Faces of his Priests.*

Another grand Source, as I have already hinted to you, of Many of the Scandals you receive from your Pastors, is the forgetting the Priest in the Man. You either dislike the Man and therefore neglect the Priest, or else You take a fancy to the Man, and carry your Liking to the Prostitution of his Dignity. If yourselves were in
Want,

Want; you would soon remember the Priest as well as the Man and recur to him for Relief, whether you liked his Personal Qualities or not: Nay whether he had it or not, you would be scandalized; if he did not relieve you. For the Poor will never believe but a Priest, if he is not half-naked, is rich. And yet how backward are you, in Affluance, of putting it in the Power of your Pastors to relieve Such of you as are or may be necessitous? A Priest is call'd to the spiritual Assistance of a Sick Person, whose greatest Distemper, perhaps, is the most starveling Poverty; and who is wasting by Inches for Want of Nourishment. How can a Priest, in such a Case, which happens but daily; how can he, if he has a Shilling in the world and is not flinted into Cruelty, refuse to part with it to redeem a perishing Neighbour from immediate Death? And yet if he has it not; he cannot give it. Still if he does not give it; how ready are the Standers-by to be scandalized, and load him, behind his Back, with the Epithets of covetous, uncharitable, nay cruel? When perhaps he feels for him but too much; feels it in the Straitness of his own Circumstance; feels it in a sympathetic Compassion for his Penitent; and feels it in the bitter Reflection on the ungenerous Neglect of his own Flock, which puts it not in his Power to relieve the Needy among them. And

therefore is it but too often that Many are offended by Phantoms in the Priesthood: Phantoms of their own raising. And therefore is it, that *The Face of our Lord hath divided* so Many of *them*, and *will not add to regard them*: Because They have forgotten the Priest in the Man: In a word, because *they have not revered the Faces of his Priests*.

But Some of you mistakenly fancy, you reverence his Priests; when, perhaps, 'tis not the Priest but the Man you reverence. You take a Fancy to a Man and forget his Function, so far as oftentimes to tempt him to forget it too. In short, if you are pleased to have a good Opinion of our Abilities; You *first* draw us into the Forfeiture of our Character, by engaging us to intermeddle in your Affairs; and *then* blame us for it when you have done. So *Satan first* tempts Man to Sin; and *then* becomes his Accuser. You are never at Rest, or never let us be so; till we enter into your Secular Intrigues: Which if we miscarry in; you will be scandalized; And if we succeed; you must be so. If, through Ignorance of the World and it's Deceits, we mismanage your Interests; you impute it in Us to Want of Sense or Want of Honour: And the Priests, *you cry*, have undone you. On the other hand, if Any of us are artful enough to out-shuffle a shuffling World in your Behalf; how can you well

well avoid being scandalized at the very Service we do you: When It suits so illy with That Simplicity, which ought to be inseparable from the holy Character of Priesthood God has invested us with; to be more, infinitely more, serviceable to you in a very different Capacity? Is it not dearly buying Scandal then, at the Hazard of our Salvation and your own, to drag us from our Studies to the Exchange; from the Altar to the Bar, the Commons, or the Tavern? What have Priests to do with Patching-up of Bargains? Making-up of Matches? Managing Estates? Or directing the Temporal Concerns of Families? When a Treaty of Commerce depends on a critical Point, which you know not how to settle without injuring yourselves or injuring Others; apply to the Priest to learn what Religious Equity requires. When Parties are agreed, and all Things are right; apply to the Priest for the Church's Blessing on your Nuptials. When your Estate wants retrieving, and you know not where to begin, without offending against Justice or Charity; seek advice from God's Minister. If Strife and Misunderstanding disturb the Christian Tranquillity of your Family; perhaps the Authority and Prudence of a Good and Judicious Priest may restore it to Harmony, when Nothing else can: And, in such Cases, the Good Offices of your

Pastor may be as serviceable as they are charitable. But to interrupt his Business of Prayer and sacred Studies, his Affairs of the Altar and other Sacerdotal Duties, to make him a Party in the temporal Management of Any of These ; is as sacrilegious a Prophanation of religious Decorum, as the Buying and Selling in the Midst of God's Temples: The only Crime against which our meek-spirited Master Christ was known to exert his Wrath openly. To speak plainly the inviting Priests to bear a Part in Matters so foreign to their Function, can proceed from Nothing but a Sovereign Scorn for the Priesthood. And therefore is it, that there has seldom happen'd a Scandal, on such an Occasion, but what has been attended as much with Ruin to the Laity, who have decoy'd him, as with Contempt to the unwary Priest, who has suffer'd himself to be decoy'd into it. And what wonder is it? For *the Face of the Lord hath divided them, he will not add to regard them*, Because they have forgotten the Priest in the Man; Because, in a word, *They have not revered the Faces of his Priests.*

I know, Christians, Some of you will tell me: If a Priest did not like the Office; you would not put it upon him. But if he really does shew you a liking to it; so much the less wise are you to employ him in it: And if he does not; it is barbarous to teize him

him to it. If he shews a Forwardness for it; what can He be but a Hireling? What Motive can he have but sordid Lucre, to neglect his real Office for One foreign to his Sphere? Yet what Reason can you have to think he likes the Office? Since, if you did not make him the first Advance; if you did not Court, nay teize him to it; where is the Priest who would have the Courage, not to say Confidence, to intrude himself into your temporal Affairs? But it is in This, as in Most of the Offences You take at your Pastors: The Scandal is chiefly owing to the Corruption of Heart in the Persons scandalized. With regard to Priests, it is almost universally true, As *Aristotle* says, "Every Man judges as he himself" is affected." The Lay-man, who cannot be familiar without being impudent, charges every Priest with Boldness, who is ever so modestly open and free. Another, who is never reserved but with Craft and Design, calls every Priest sly who is modest and bashful. From the same corrupted Springs proceed innumerable Mistakes of his Conduct. If he is grave; he is morose or out of Temper: If chearful; he must needs be thought dissolute: If he talks of Common Things; he is call'd worldly: And if he variegates Conversation with a few Maxims of Piety; he is a Cant. For Heaven's sake, Christians, either cease to
be

be scandalized so easily yourselves, or cease to furnish your own Matter. Either take your Pastors such as God sends them to you, Priests and yet frail Men; or agree among yourselves on your own Model of a perfect Priest: And if it be consistent with God's Honour and your own Good; I dare answer, that all good Shepherds will study as much as possibly to become such. But how is it possible for any Priest to content you All; when Every-One is so industrious to idolize a Scandal of his own? When we visit you often; we lose your Respect; Forgetful of the Priest who visits you for your Soul's sake, you mind only the Man and think we visit you for our own Ends. If we visit you but seldom; remembering the Man, you think we neglect you: Still forgetting that, as Priests, if we attend the Sick and our own Studies; we can have but little Time to spare for idle or unnecessary Visits.

For want of reflecting on This, when you invite a Priest to your Table, tho' in ever so cool a manner, and he comes not; how ready are you to impute it to Neglect or Contempt of you? to Haughtiness, Pique or Something worse? And yet let him come but once uninvited, or let him indiscreetly come as often as you invite him; and how probably may he find the Words of St. *Jerome* true, that " the Priest, who never refuses
" an

"an Invitation, will soon sink into the
"Contempt of his Host?" There are but
two Sorts of Persons, with whom a Priest
can dine: The Poor and the Rich. With
the Poor, it is barbarous to dine; and with
the Rich it is dangerous. A Poor Man will
oftener ask his Pastor to his Table than a
Rich Man; and generally with a Heart full
of Sincerity. Nay what is more, in spite
of all the Priest can say to the contrary,
shall lavish a Week's Income to entertain
him, the Want of which must make him-
self even suffer for a whole Week. But
then surely it would be barbarous in a Priest
knowingly to accept Invitations from Such?
For if he does; he must ruin his Host. ---
And yet if he does not; he is censured as
Proud, above Him, and I know not what.
Still is it better to be censured unjustly than
deserve Censure. And therefore when a
Priest does think it right to dine with
a Friend; the safer way is to dine with
Those whom he cannot hurt. Tho' even
with the Rich there is Danger: Danger of
losing the Esteem necessary to do them
Good, through their mistaking him: Danger
of copying their Manners: And Danger of
being thought to prefer the Rich to the
Poor, if he eats often with the Former.
And if he does not; how liable is he not
to be censured! Tho' still, *I say*, it is
much better to suffer Censure than deserve
it:

it: And therefore the safest Way for every Priest, is, in my private Opinion, neither to dine nor visit but when and where he may do Good; where he is either wanted or wish'd for; and where this Truth is believed: That a Minister of God does the Peasant or the Prince he condescends to visit more Honour than he can receive. And This a Priest may inviolably practice without departing in the least from that mean Opinion of himself which every Christian, and much more Ecclesiastics, ought to cultivate; if He takes but due Care to steer between the odious Extremes of Meanness and Arrogance; if, in short, while He is ready to submit his Person to the lowliest Offices of Fraternal Charity in consideration of his own Littleness, he is still mindful enough of the Dignity of his Function never to stoop to any pitiful Complacences which may bring his holy Character into Contempt.

You see, Christians, I speak very frankly; and as your own Good, more than That of your Pastors, is concern'd in the Subject I am treating, I think it my Duty to be quite ingenuous. Be pleased or displeased with what I say; provided you mistake not my Meaning. I would fain persuade Christians to throw aside their pernicious Jealousies of Priests; to shake-off that Perversity, which makes them see the Actions
of

of their Pastors in a false injurious Light; and which may incline them even now, perhaps, to construe all I say to some self-pointed View, or odious Reflection. But Thou, O searcher of all Hearts, who bid'st me utter this important Doctrin, knowest how much my Soul detests such Prostitutions of thy Holy Word!

II. What I have hitherto said then, Christians, was only with the Intent to convince you, that the Major Part of the Scandals you take at your Pastors proceed from some Mistake in your own Judgment, or some lurking Perversity in your Wills: *That is, in short*, the Corruption of your own Heads or Hearts are the chief Causes of them. And yet I do not pretend to say, there are no scandalous Priests. Would to Heaven, I could with any Reason even think there are None! But then, how small would you find the Number, to What you make it in your mistaken Notions; were you All as slow to believe amiss of them, as you are to credit any Good of them? Let any extraordinary Good be spoken of a Priest; how loth are you to credit it without the most indisputable Authority? Bare Circumstances will not do: You must have ocular Demonstration; or you will not venture to believe it. And yet the most trivial Circumstances shall suffice to induce you

to fix the blackest Guilt upon your Pastors; every slighting or scandalous Tale is immediately swallow'd for Gospel-Truth, and you require no Character of the Person, who spoke the Scandal: 'Tis sufficient that he speak against a Priest, for the most notorious Liar, Libertin, or Profligate to gain Credit; tho' he be an Enemy to the Priests he belies, tho' he be Enemy to the Priesthood, nay to Religion in general: It is known by Experience, that the Major Part of Retailers of Scandal against Priests are a Set of Wretches, whose Word, if their Actions were publickly known, would pass in no Court to condemn or even lessen the Worth of the meanest Creature in the Creation. Yet how often do you take the Character of Priests from such Hands? Nay now a-days the Reputation of every Priest lies at the Mercy of every Heretic, Jew, or Infidel; notwithstanding the known Pleasure, which These frequently and maliciously take in calumniating them; and notwithstanding that the gravest Fathers of the Church (and particularly *St. Augustin*) insist that the Accusation of Heretics, tho' ever so Many, neither can nor ought to have any Weight with good Catholics against a Priest. How many of the most deserving Pastors in God's Church have innocently bled in their good Name, by the inveterate Enemies of Religion? And if every Priest is not totally defamed

defamed by the Heretics who know him; (to the Shame of Some of us be it spoken) it is, I fear, more owing to their Generosity in not belying him, than to our Charity in discrediting any Lies they can or could invent. Why then do we wonder that so Many from among us, deserting the Standard of Christ's Cross, fall into Heresy and Infidelity? Why are we astonish'd, that, among Those who remain with us, there is so little Piety and so much Irregularity: When as the Prophet foretold, *the Face of our Lord hath divided them, he will not add to regard them: Because They have not revered the Faces of his Priests.*

Beware then, Christians, O beware how you suffer yourselves to give into such ungenerous Treatment, of your Pastors. Remember, however weak they are, they are the Ministers of God, and God *has chosen the weak Things of this World to confound the Strong.* Be not then easy to take Offence at them: Nor add your own Weakness to their Frailty, to render them useless. Reflect on the Dangers which such a Conduct exposes you to. It is the Priest himself who is to answer for his own Conduct; not You. However imperfect his private Life may be; if he performs the Duties of his public Function to you; his Authority is the same, his Commission is from God, and You may reap all the Advantages

from him, which a Minister of God, is capable of yielding to You, excepting good Example. And They are not sent to you chiefly for Example; but to instruct you and point-out to you a nobler Example than They can give, your Saviour Christ. Whether, they follow him or not; once they point him out to You, You are obliged to follow *Him* not *Them*. Why then will you solicit your own Ruin, by losing Sight of Christ, to pry into the Steps of Those, who point-out to you the Road to him. This you are sure of, that, if you miss of Him, your Ruin is inevitable; nay irreparable. And how can you avoid missing of Him; when, neglectful of the Way to him, your Thoughts are wholly bent on following the Ways of a Man, who, tho' he directs you right, is perhaps going wrong himself. But whether he is or not, if you think him so; the Consequence to you will be the same. For once you conceive an ill Opinion of your Guide, your Confidence in his Advice will vanish; and therefore, mistrusting his Knowledge or Sincerity, you'll steer, out of meer Perversity, a different Road from That he points-out to You. Or else, becoming your own Guides, you'll turn your Backs on Heaven; and, following the high Way of Liberty and Pleasure which your Passions strew, you'll steer head-long to Ruin. There is Nothing more natural to us, tho' nothing more

more weak than the despising the best of Advice of a Man, who does not follow his own Counsel, or is not thought to do so. Whereas the Advice is still the same, both good and profitable, whether practised by the Giver, or neglected. However as it is the favourit Study of the Devil to turn all our Foibles to our Destruction, one fatal Artifice by which he draws whole Legions of Souls to Perdition, is to destroy their Confidence in their Spiritual Pastors. The first Step he takes is to make a Man judge rashly of the most innocent Actions of a Priest. If he consents to That; next he pronounces him Guilty, then comparing his imaginary Faults with the Perfection he teaches, he discredits his Doctrin. The same Corruption of Mind and Heart, which makes him think ill of One, teaches him to think amiss at last of All he knows. No sooner has he thrown-off a necessary Respect for God's Ministers, than he begins to think Religion a meer Jest, the Craft of Priests, a Bug-bear to keep Fools in awe. From Thoughts he soon proceeds to Words and Actions suitable; sets God and Virtue at Defiance; gives Vice the Reins and sinks the miserable Dupe of his ungenerous Rashness. But here the Mischief does not end: Not content with being thus wicked alone, he seldom fails to use his utmost Arts to draw unwary Souls into his basest Notions of
of

of their Pastors; that, stript of all their Counsels and Assistance, he may the more effectually ensnare them. Thus do such Wretches finally become the active Tools of Hell, to be it's Prey at last. Thus the Judgment of the Almighty justly infatuates them, when his Grace, through their own perverse Rashness has deserted them. And thus is the Vengeance of God, foretold by *Jeremiah*, terribly fulfill'd in them. *The Face of our Lord hath divided them, He will not add to regard them, because They have not revered the Faces of his Priests.*

What is it which has so often rent the Church of God with Schisms? What is it which has given Birth to so many pernicious and detestable Heresies? What usher'd into this Land so much Ignorance, Error, Infidelity and Debauchery? What still cherishes Indevotion, nay Immorality, among the faithful Sheep, whom Christ still reserves within his Fold of this Kingdom? May we not, if we run to the Fountain-head, impute all these Disorders to the Jealousies, Mistrusts, Grudges, Rash-Judgments and Disrespects, which our Ancestors entertain'd, and We after their Example still entertain, of our lawful Shepherds? Why are we deaf to their Counsels? Why are We so obstinately imperfect, while they take so much Pains to make us perfect? Why --- but because We lose the Respect due to them

them by imputing the Misconduct of a few Hirelings to the Fault of the greater, far greater, Number of Good Shepherds? Why--- but because We neglect the Man in the Priest; slight or prostitute the Priest in the Man; put the worst Constructions on the most innocent Actions of the Best of them; ungenerously colour the purest Intentions with such Tinctures as are drawn merely from the Corruption of our own Heads and Hearts; and finally trust their Good Names (so necessary for the Good of Souls) to the Mercy of their Enemies, of Libertins, nay of Infidels: Much readier to take, from Such, a bad Character of them, than a Good-One from the most unexceptionable Evidence?

III. But after all You'll say: "What a deal of Rout is here about these Priests?" "What a deal of Nicety is required to make them useful? Surely they are very ticklish Beings; if it requires so much Circumspection not to offend them?" "What must We do then? Are We to approach them, as Some Heathens do their Idols, with Veils over our Eyes?" "Or are we to consider them, as Angels, void of every Fault?" No, Christians: I would not have you consider them as Angels, but as Men; nay as frail Men; nay as sinful Men. But then I would not have you

you be Sinners, because They are Such. I would not have you endeavour to be blind to their Foibles, for fear of offending Them: But I would have you less ready to see double with regard to them, for fear of doing Damage to yourselves. If You think ill of Them; you will think but lightly of their Doctrin: And once You condemn the saving Documents of Christian Truth, what Profit can you reap from it's Dispensers? If These then become useless to You; whither will you have Recourse for the Means of Salvation? God thought not fit to make you the Judges over Yourselves; but has appointed Priests to be his Ministers to You, and made Them your Guides and Pastors, nay Judges between Himself and You. He has placed Them over you, in his Stead, with full Commissions and Authority to cherish, feed, and lead you to Salvation by dispensing his Mysteries to You. So let Man esteem us, says St. PAUL,* in the Name of the Priesthood, *So let Man esteem us as Ministers of Christ and Dispensers of the Mysteries of GOD.* And in quality of Such it is, that Christ says to his Priesthood: *He, who hears You, hears Me; and He, who despises You, despises Me.*

* 1 Cor. iv.

Here then is a positive Injunction laid upon You to hear your Pastors as you would hear Christ himself, and to hear them without any degree of Contempt. Here is an

an exprefs Declaration, that every Contempt of Them or of their Doctrins for their Sake is a Contempt fhewn to Chrift and to his Doctrin. Yet how fhall you avoid having Contempt for Such of them as you take Scandal from? Surely then your Salvation muft be greatly at ftake, in every Offence You take at your Pastors, whether right or wrong: In-as-much-as It muft more or lefs diminifh your Attention to their Doctrin, and even to their beft Advice; and therefore destroy the Advantages which They are fent to afford You. It cannot then but be confiderably more your Intereft than theirs, that You endeavour to entertain the kindeft and moft charitable Opinion of Them you are able to conceive, whether they be wholly worthy of it or not. But let us get forward and fee --- What are the Advantages we may procure from thinking favourably of our fpiritual Guides.

In the firft Place then: While a Pastor is in Poffeffion of the Good Esteem of his Flock, his fpiritual Advice will have all It's due Weight with Them: They will take what he fays in good Part; and will endeavour to reach the Perfection he teaches them. And if all do not immediately break with Vice and give themfelves up to Virtue; yet Some will do it: The Stronger will buoy-up the Weaker and all at length will help Each-other to attain, if not the Sum-

mit of Perfection, at least the State of Sanctifying Grace and virtuous Struggle towards it. Thus will the Esteem of every Christian Flock for it's Pastor go hand in hand with All his Labours for their spiritual Good. If he deserves it not with regard to his private Life; the fruitful Success of his Endeavours will pique him probably to deserve it. And if he does deserve their Good Opinion of him; the same Success will spur him to deserve it more and more.

Priests tho' they are Priests are Men. And in the very worst of Men there is a Pride which prompts them often to blush at the Esteem their Conscious Guilt declares them undeserving of. Nor is this Pride to be consider'd as a Vice, but rather as the Seed of Virtue lent them by Heaven to rouse their sleeping Souls to merit the Esteem they feel such Pleasure in possessing. Tho' then, at first, the Labours of a quite imperfect Pastor may be the Fruits of mere Vain-glory; yet if the Esteem his Flock has for him should crown those Labours with Success; 'tis highly probable, that Grace will at last mould his former Vanity into real Zeal. He'll blush to see his Flock improve in Virtues, which he only knows in Theory; and will at length push his Preaching into Practice. Nay let a Pastor's Vigilance and Labours for his Flock be ever so piously intended, let him be warm'd with

with ever so sincere a Zeal; he'll feel Sometimes the Man, and will be apt to flagg: But if the Good-Esteem of Those he has the Care of secnds his Zeal; the prosperous Prospect of his Labours will rouse his nodding Virtue with the Spur of laudable Ambition, or rather let me call it *Emulation*. He'll be ashamed of being excell'd by Any of his Sheep. And loth to let one enter Heaven before him, he'll push-on towards It, at their Head, and grow a perfect Saint, in trying to make Them Such, not only by his Doctrin, but by his Example. Thus Christians, is it in the Power of every Christian Flock to save their own Souls and their Pastor's too, by cherishing their favourable Esteem of him and not suffering themselves on light Occasions to be scandalized at his Behaviour.

Again another Advantage which will attend upon These is, that, while you entertain a Good-Opinion of your Pastors, you will not only make them of sovereign use to Themselves and to You, but even to Others. Thinking Well of a Person and speaking well of him are constant Attendants, and public Fame ever waits upon private Esteem. If then you endeavour to cherish advantageous Ideas of the Merit of your Pastor; it will naturally prompt you to speak his Praise to Those, who know him not, or know him but little. This

will raise their Curiosity to see and hear him; and the Prepossession you have given them in Favour of him will make Them the more ready to listen to him without Prejudice, and enable Him to win them over with the greater Ease to the Doctrine of Christ and the Unity of his Church. This is what our Divine Lord himself hints to you in the Xth of St. *John*, *Other Sheep I have, says he, who are not of this Fold. Them also I must bring and They shall hear my Voice: And there shall be made one Fold and one Shepherd.*

Such then are the eminent Advantages of not being easily scandalized at your Pastors: Such the Great Fruits of entertaining an Esteem for them. You honour Christ by it; You become the happy Instruments of promoting the Salvation; perhaps, the Perfection of your Pastors themselves: You may be the happy Means, under God, of uniting Thousands of straying Souls to the saving Fold of Christ's Church. And, whether you are, or not; once you have done your Part towards it, the same Merit will be ascribed to You, by the all-rewarding Goodness of God, as if it had really been so: And lastly, whether Your Pastor be perfect or imperfect; good or bad in his own private Life; whether Others follow the saving Doctrines he teaches, or not; if your Good Opinion of him

him gives Weight to his Advice enough to induce You to follow it; you will, you must, be saved yourselves, nay lifted to Perfection. All which Advantages are lost and barter'd for the most eminent Dangers to Salvation, by being easy to take Scandal at the Shepherd, who is to feed and fit you for it.

IV. You will, say, perhaps, Beloved:
 “ This would be glorious Advice and as
 “ easy to practice, as it is worthy of Ap-
 “ probation; could we but keep our Eyes
 “ always shut and our Ears always stopt.
 “ But That is impracticable to all but the
 “ Deaf and Blind. While the Senses are
 “ awake to Sensation; they will, they
 “ must, be affected by the Objects which
 “ strike them. What else are they given
 “ us for? How then is it possible for us,
 “ while we have Eyes to see and Ears to
 “ hear, to avoid being scandalized at such
 “ Pastors as give us but too much room for
 “ taking Scandal; by objecting to our Eyes
 “ Actions quite opposit to the Virtues they
 “ preach; and by giving Occasion for such
 “ Reports as continually din our Ears with
 “ Matter for Ideas very different from
 “ the Esteem we should and would gladly
 “ entertain of Them, if they would let
 “ us?” Why really, Christians, to speak
 the Truth frankly, it is a very difficult
 Matter

Matter to preserve a perfect Esteem for Such Pastors, where this is really the Case: Remember what I say, where this is really the Case. But then difficult as this Duty is, it is not impracticable; otherwise there could be no Obligation to attempt it. And that we are under some Obligation of entertaining all possible Esteem for the most imperfect Pastors, and putting the best Construction on their Actions; seems very evident. For in the first Place; the Corruption of our Nature ever prompts us to flight the soundest Advices of a Man, whom we view in a contemptible Light. It is therefore morally impossible we should profit by the Instructions of an imperfect Pastor; if we are scandalized at him, as we certainly shall be, if we suffer ourselves to believe him such. And therefore the Commandment of God to his People to hear their Pastors, must virtually include a Precept of esteeming them. Now such a Commandment has Christ given to all Christians in these Words: *He, who hears You, hears Me; and He, who despises You, despises Me:* A Commandment which extends to all the Flock in general, and excludes no Pastor lawfully sent, and not yet recall'd by the Church.

The most imperfect of your Pastors cannot be less respectable than the *Scribes* and the *Pharisees*, whose Lives were evil, tho' their
their

their Doctrins were good: And yet Christ, while their Authority subsisted, expressly commanded the *Jews* to reverence their Counsels, without paying any Attention to their Actions. *Upon the Chair of Moses*, says He, *have sitten the Scribes and the Pharisees*: * Yes Lord, they are the Successors of *Moses* and preach-up his Doctrins: But then, as Thou knowest and has't said, *they say and do not*. † How then shall we benefit by their Counsels? "How? Why keep your Attention fix'd to their Dignity: they are still your lawful Pastors. *All Things therefore, whatsoever they shall say to You do Ye; but according to their Works do ye not*." † *Ibid.* Here then, Christians, is an express Command to you; to obey and revere the most imperfect of Your Pastors; as long as the Church upholds them in their Office. Let us change but Names; and the Precept will appear to You in it's full Force. *In the Chair of Christ have sitten* your Pastors and Priests? "How shall we be sure of That, *You'll say?*" Why take it from Christ himself for the greater Certainty: Go, says He to Them, *Go behold I send you: He, who beareth You, beareth Me; and He, who despiseth You, despiseth Me*. "Well it is undoubted then, They are Substitutes of Christ; They sit in his Chair and they preach his Doctrin. But still, if *They say and do not*;

*St. Matth
xxiii.

† *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.*

“not; What Benefit can we reap from
 “Them? What Fruits but Scandal?”
 Hold Christians, hold: They are still Mi-
 nisters of Christ to you: They are still the
 Dispensers of the Mysteries of God. *All*
Things therefore whatsoever they shall say
to you, do ye: If They act as they preach
 or teach; do That too. *But* if their Actions,
 good or bad, appear such as you cannot do
 without Sin; *according to their Works do Ye*
not. Their Actions you are no where com-
 manded to follow; but their Doctrins you
 are bidden to obey. Their Lives whether vir-
 tuous or vicious, you will not be accountable
 for; but you will be accountable for the
 Fruits of their Doctrin. In short, their
 Words you must regard: Their Actions you
 may, only when such as You-yourselfes
 may practice with Safety: But when other-
 wise; you neither may nor ought to mind
 Those; much less to judge them: Unless
 They are such open Violations of Virtue as
 judge themselves.

“What! When we see Faults com-
 “mitted; may we not judge them? Did
 “not Christ himself pass Sentence on the
 “Vices of the Scribes and Pharisees?”
 Yes, He did so: But there is an infinit
 Distance between Christ and You. His
 Penetration was infinit: He was the Searcher
 of all Hearts: He saw the Springs of their
 Actions; and therefore had a Right to
 declare

declare the Pastors of his Time, *mere white Sepulchres*. Your Insight is shallow : You see but the Superficies of Actions : The Heart of Man is a Mystery to you ; and therefore You can pronounce no Actions evil but such as pronounce themselves so ; because you are Strangers to the Motives they flow from. Hence I think it sufficiently appears, that You can seldom have just room to be scandalized at Any of your Pastors for common Actions in Life which are not expresse Breaches of the Laws of God and Nature : Because You can seldom be sure, that You see a Fault in them. If you see a Priest (which Heaven forbid you ever should !) commit a premeditated Violation of the Commandments ; a Sacrilege ; a Theft ; or other gross Vice ; if you can believe your Eyes, you must pronounce him guilty. For the Nature of the Fact is such as is inconsistent with Innocence. Tho' even here the Eyes have been more than once deceived. But in Actions, which appear neither good nor bad in themselves, You can never, with any Safety, fix a Crime on him ; tho' the Appearances be opposit to the very Doctrin he preaches : Because bare Appearances are of a deceitful Nature ; and the Man who trusts his Judgment to his Senses, will oftener be deceived than inform'd.

For Example, you see a Priest, perhaps, a little fluster'd in his Senses: And yet how deceived may you not be; if, trusting to such an Appearance, You pronounce him a Drunkard; when perhaps, the Abstemiousness of his Diet has render'd a very necessary, yet frugal Potion in toxicating to him? Another you charge with Insincerity, when, perhaps, if his Tongue was not tied, he might with Edification convince you, that he only told you one Part of a Truth to cover or evade another, which sacramental or natural Secrecy, or the Love of Christian Charity and Peace, obliged him to conceal. A Priest may dress perhaps a little vainly in appearance: Can you therefore be sure, that there is Vanity in his Heart for doing so? No: Perhaps his chief Temptation lies in a lurking Ambition to be thought humble; and That is one ingenious Means he makes use of to deserve rather than possess the Applause due to Humility. Another on the reverse, to judge by the Outward Unseemliness of his Garb, you would take to be an indolent uncleanly or covetous Person: One, in short, whom you would be disposed to call a lazy Sloven or a miserly Niggard. But ten to one you are mistaken. Perhaps, too great an Attachment to Neatness may be his chief Obstacle to the Perfection he is aiming at; and the Deformity of his
Garb

Garb may be the only Means he has to surmount it. In a word, a thousand Instances may be brought: Each of which might afford a thousand Arguments to prove, that, till we can penetrate to the secret Foldings of the Heart and come at the Knowledge of the Moving Springs, the Motives of acting, we can never be safe in taking Scandal at the Actions of any Man, which are not in themselves inconsistent with Innocence; such as the Crimes I have just mention'd, and such as I hope you will never have room even to suspect in your Pastors.

“ Well grant all This, *you'll say*: But
 “ then how shall we be able to excuse, or
 “ avoid being scandalized at, a Man, who
 “ is forever preaching to us in Confession,
 “ or out of it, Steadiness, Patience, For-
 “ giveness; yet is himself extremely fickle,
 “ peevish, jealous and resenting.” How?
 Why in the first Place, Fickleness, Peevish-
 ness, Jealousy, and Resentment are often
 the Effect of Temper, and Priests, while
 they are Mortals, will be subject to the
 rude Treatments of Temper; which are
 rather their Misfortune than Fault. To
 carry them to Heaven, Priests must have
 their Temptations to struggle with as well
 as You. Not One of those we have named
 are Faults in the Man, who gives No con-
 sent to them. And how do you know that

the Priest, who discovers such Foibles in himself, does really consent to them? You are Strangers to the inward Combats he manfully undertakes to surmount them; and therefore is it, that you often take Offence at That which perhaps shall be the Matter of his Glory. *Secondly*, how do you know, but that What you attribute to Fickleness, to Peevishness, to Jealousy, or Resentment may be the Effects of a prudential Zeal, which may not however discover it's Motives? It is often a necessary Means to awake the sleeping Christian, and bring him to a Sense of his Duty.

But what if These or any other Actions of theirs be real Faults; are are you therefore to loose the Esteem and Respect due to them as Pastors? Christ sends you for Pastors, not Angels but Men: Not impeccable Men, but sinful Men. The Church supposes them Such; and, as Such, obliges Them as much as You, to Confession: Nay they acknowledge themselves such, by going to Confession; by imploring in their own Persons, and praying You to implore, their Forgiveness at the Tribunal of God. Why then should you be scandalized, if, They sometimes appear what they own themselves to be. When they sin like You, they prove themselves to be frail like you: And when they preach against the very Faults they are guilty of; it proves they

they are not obstinate in Wrong, tho' frailly prone to it.

Make often Reflections like These, Dear Christians, and it will enable you to avoid the being easily scandalized at your Pastors : Nay They will enable you to reap Benefit from the most Imperfect among them. You will see their Actions in a very different Light. You will put a good Construction on all Such Parts of their Conduct as will bear it : And where they will not bear One ; You will remember the Frailty of the Man to excuse the Mistakes of the Priest. You will remember, that they are still GOD's Ministers, still empower'd to dispense the Mysteries of GOD to you in Life and at Death. You will recollect the Labours they go through, to teach and instruct you ; and the Dangers they encounter, by assisting you, at the Hazard of their Liberty and Lives ; by visiting you amid'st the Contagions of a neauseous Prison, and the Infections of every malignant Sickness. This will cherish your Respect and Esteem for Them ; and Your Respect and Esteem for Them will render their Doctrins of sovereign Benefit to You.

Such then, Beloved Brethren, are the Many and important Advantages of not being easily Scandalized at your Pastors ; and thus may you reap Benefit even from Such of them as may give you but too much Room

Room to be scandalized. I speak only of Those mere Hirelings, who may intrude under the Wing of the Church's Authority. For as to such unhappy Men, whose Mistaken Conduct has justly drawn upon them her Indignation and forced Her to expell them from her Fold to save her tender Flock; tho' their very Fall may afford You Matter of Edification rather than of Scandal, if you consider it in a genuin Light; yet is it foreign to my present Purpose; And therefore shall take no farther Notice of Them than I have done in a former *Sermon* * I only purpose, Dear-loved Laity, to prevail upon you, through the tender Love I bear You, not to render fruitless the Labours of your lawful Pastors by your mistaken Prejudices against their Persons or their Conduct. Ah! Let me then beseech You, rather to endeavour at cherishing such an Esteem for All as may render even the Least among them of sovereign eternal Use to You. In short, to use the seasonable Words of St. PETER, *Casting away all Uncleanneſs and Abundance of Malice*, laying aside all Rash-Judgment and Prejudice which the Corruption of your own Heads or Hearts may raise in you against Them, *in Meekneſs receive* (from their Lips) *the ingrafted Word which is able to ſave your Souls.* †

† S. James
i.

* On Mid-Lent Sunday. p. 169.

To

To conclude, Dear Auditors: Be generous, and meekly take the naked Truths I have utter'd to you throughout this Sermon, in that honest undefigning Simplicity with which my God can bear me Witness I have spoken them. If I have said one single Word in this Discourse which can displease you; it is beyond my Design. And yet tho' I should have made the Greatest of you peevish; I cannot be sorry, if what I have said be crown'd with the Success of benefiting the Least among You. Vent on me (I give you chearful Leave) vent all the bitterest Effects of your Resentment: I care not; if You but learn from Me to treat your other more useful Pastors henceforth with such Esteem and Confidence as may enable You to reap Salvation from them. Be angry, till Experience teaches You that you are wrongly so: Be angry or be pleased, I still shall tell You, inconsistent Catholics, that one chief Cause of all the Miseries which You have suffer'd in this Land has been, because *You have not revered the Faces of God's Priests.* * And if You go on thus, much longer; the Time will probably be brought to pass, when the Words of the Apostle shall be verified, *Here is now sought* (but sought alas in vain) *among the Dispensers of God's Mysteries, One who may be found faithful.* † Yes, O hitherto believing

* Jerem.
Lament. iv.

† 1 Cor. iv.

lieving Christians ! The Time will come, if you continue your Contempt of Priests, when God their sole Constituent shall punish your Perversity by leaving you without a Priest to disrespect, without an Altar to approach, without a Faith to save you, without a Heaven to hope for. Call me then an insolent a haughty Priest for warning you of your impending Doom : *To me it is a Thing of least Concern, to be judged by You.* * For He, who judgeth me, is our Lord † Nay, say of me to One-Another, as did the Jews of JEREMIAH : ‡ Come let us devise Devices of this affronting Preacher : Let us smite him with the Tongue and not attend to all his Words : Persecute ye and let us persecute him ; if by any Means he may be deceived and We prevail against him and be revenged on him. In short, wreak all your Spleen : I cannot fear the Rage of Any of you nor court your Smiles. Let the Hireling, whose own the Sheep are not, see the Wolf coming ; and flee. For my Part I have Naught to fear or hope from Any of you. And therefore so I save but your Souls from Danger and Illusion ; I heed not the rest. For if my Text says right ; the Good Shepherd giveth his Life for his Sheep. And wide as I am at present of being Such a One myself, I earnestly covet to be Such after the Example of my heavenly Master.

* Ibid

† Ibid

‡ Jerem.
xviii, xx.

Master. O! Thou, Dear Lord, vouchsafe, in thy good Time, to make of Me and all the Priesthood *Good* and Faithful Shepherds. And if thy People's Good require it, and thy own Honour will permit; gives us thy useleſs Servants the inestimable Bleſſing of ripening this Flock for Thee with our own Blood: Give us the Sanctity of Manners and Purity of Doctrin requiſit to guide them ſafe to Heaven, in ſpite of their unthankful Frowardneſs; and open all their Hearts to take with Chriſtian Candour the Doctrins thou do'ſt dictate to us: That We may loſe not One of them; but at their Head be join'd with that triumphant Flock above, where *there ſhall be but one Fold and one Paſtor*. O hear me! God of Mercy hear me; I beſeech Thee; *In the Name, &c.*





S E R M O N

ON THE

Third SUNDAY after EASTER.

St. J O H N xvi. 20, 22.

Amen, Amen; I say to You, that You shall weep and lament; but the World shall rejoice: And You shall be made sorrowful; but your Sorrow shall be turn'd into Joy.... And You therefore, now indeed, have Sorrow: But I will see You again and your Heart shall rejoice; and your Joy No-One shall take from You.



HERE are then, Beloved Audience, there are Sorrows to be endured in this Life even by the Just? Yes; undoubtedly there are: And They are Matter of Necessity for Christians to submit to. What! Shall Christ's faithful Servants then be no more exempt from Sadness of Heart, while

while in the Flesh, than the Slaves of the World? Hold, Beloved, hold: This is no Consequence of the Other. On the Reverse. The Sorrows of the Just are Sorrows indeed for a little While; but then they are mere external Sorrows, mere superficial Grievs, which reach no farther than the Senses. Whereas the Sorrows of the Unjust are not only real but endless; not only outwardly afflicting to the Senses but inwardly tormenting to the Heart. The Sadness of the Good then is a Contrast to That of the Wicked. Or rather to set this Matter in a more amiable Light, let me say: The Grievs of the Godly are a Contrast to the Joys of the Ungodly; as our Divine Lord plainly shews, by the Apposition in which He places Both, in the Words of my Text. The Wicked, it is true, have their Joy, such as it is; which, being wholly fix'd on sensual Objects, amuses only their sensitive Appetites: too material and gross to penetrate to the Heart. *The World shall rejoice,* says Christ; Yes: But with what Kind of Joy? Ah! Not with the Joy of Peace to the Heart; For *there is No Peace for the Wicked,* says the Lord. The Joy then of Sinners is a Joy of Fiction, a transitory Gladness, of the Sense; which, lasting but a little while, shall end in everlasting Heaviness of Soul. Such the Joy of the Wicked:

G g g 2

And

And This they shall have. Yes. *The World shall rejoice.*

But You, Beloved, continues Christ, *You shall weep and lament : And You shall be sorrowful.* The Good then must have their Sorrow : Which however, arising only from the external Pressure of sensitive Temptations, is too feeble to affect their Hearts, consoled within and sovereignly fortified with all resisting Grace : It is a Sorrow therefore which only plays about the Surface of the Sense ; but cannot gain Admittance to the Soul : It exists but for a little while ; and ends at last in never-ceasing Joy of Heart. Yes : *Your Sorrow, says our Divine Lord, shall be turn'd into Joy, and your Heart shall rejoice and your Joy No-One shall take from You.*

Hence I cannot help drawing too very serious Reflections, the One melancholy the Other consoling : Both of the last Importance to us All. And They are These :

- I. The Joy of Worldlings is Matter of the tenderest Pity ; Inasmuch as It is a shrew'd Symptom of Reprobation to eternal Woe ; *And*
- II. The Sorrows of Good Christians are Matter of the noblest Emulation ; inas-much-as They are the blessed Seeds of a Fulness of Joy without End or Bounds,

" O God, Thou sole and sovereign
 " Source of every solid Joy! Convince us
 " of these Truths; and graciously instruct
 " us to prefer the Sadness of thy blessed
 " Cross to every gay Illusion which the
 " World rejoices in: That, eager after No-
 " thing but the main Concern to follow
 " Thee, we may, the little while We have
 " to live, sow in abundance the fruitful
 " Tears of Piety and come to Thee at length
 " loaded with Sheafs of everlasting Glad-
 " ness. "

I. *You shall be made sorrowful*, says Christ
 to his Disciples, and through Them to all
 his Elect. The State of Christians then
 must necessarily be a State of Suffering. *In*
This, says the Apostle, *in this we are call'd*.
 The Bird is not made to fly, nor the Fish
 to swim, more than Christians are born to
 to suffer in the Flesh. *We, who are bap-*
tized in Christ Jesus, in his Death are bap-
tized, says St. PAUL. * In our very Baptism
 we are endow'd with the Spirit of JESUS
 CHRIST at his Death and in his Sufferings:
 And it is in expectation of our improving
 this Spirit within us that We are made Heirs
 to the Joy of his rising from Death. So
 that *if we become co-planted to the Similitude*
of his Death; we shall be also (co-planted
 to the Similitude) *of his Resurrection*, as
 the Apostle observes; † Otherwise We †

* Romans
vi.

† Ibid.

never

never shall be so. For, says our Divine Lord,
He, who does not take-up his Cross and follow

*St. Matth
 x.

Me, is not worthy of Me. * Properly speaking
 then, We Christians are riveted to the Cross
 of Christ; *That is* in other Terms, We are
 indispensably bound to share with him in
 his Sorrows, if we will share with him in
 his Glory. *It behoved Christ to suffer and*

† St. Luke
 xxiv.

so to enter into his Glory. † Can his Disciples
 then hope to enter thither after him by any
 smother Way than That of Sufferings? Is
 the Servant greater than his Lord, the Dis-
 ciple than his Master, the Captive then his
 Redeemer? No, no: Christians, If Sorrows
 were expedient for your Divine Lord; Joy
 cannot be expedient for You. Surely then
 to rejoice and be merry with the World
 cannot be safe Surely the Joy of Worldlings
 is a piteous Symptom of their having no
 Part with Christ in the Inheritance of the
 Joys to come.

If You think, Christians, that You may
 rejoice with the World and with God; if
 you hope to enjoy Pleasure here and here-
 after; You deceive Yourself. No, no:
 Every Thing must have it's Turn. Joy and
 Sorrow cannot at once occupy the Heart of
 Man: Yet all Men, Good and Bad, are
 destin'd to taste of Both, one Time or other.
 Both then must have their Turn and follow
 One-another in the Heart of every Man.
 There are no Men, in this State of Mor-
 tality,

talities, so pure, so innocent, even Those whose Virtues merit them a boundless Measure of Eternal Joys, but what have some light Failings to entitle them to mourn a while: Surely then, if it behoved the Source of Innocence to suffer ere he enter'd into his Glory; it is but just, that his imperfect Servants should follow him in his Sufferings ere they are put into Possession of their final Joy? Now let us reason on the Reverse. There are not Any Men so wicked, so abandon'd, not even They whose Life is one continued Traffic of perpetual Woe, but what have done, at one time or another, some slender Good, to merit a Degree, however small, of Joy and Pleasure. And God, whose Justice will not suffer in his Servants the slightest Fault unpunish'd, is yet too merciful to leave the slenderest Merit unrewarded. Therefore does he give-up to Sorrow for a little while Those favourit Souls of his for whom he is preparing an interminable Store of solid Joys. Just is it therefore, that those unhappy Wretches, whose future Grievs shall know no Measure and no End, should have in this Life the passing Taste of Joys they have earn'd; since they will have no Relish for them in the Next. And These in Fact they have. Hence does our Saviour say to his Elect: "*Amen, Amen, I say to You, that*
You shall weep and lament, but the
World

" *World shall rejoice.* Yes; You, my Be-
 " loved, You upon the whole have faith-
 " fully served me: And therefore have I
 " reserved for You a Joy which *No-One*
 " *shall take from you.* And yet have you
 " displeased me by serving me with less
 " Constancy less Fervor, less Purity than
 " you ought: And therefore will I suspend
 " you a while from that Joy. *A little*
 " *while then, and you shall not see me; a*
 " *little while, and the Bride-groom absent*
 " *you shall weep and lament.* But again
 " *a little while, and you shall see me; again*
 " *a little while, and the Bride-groom shall*
 " *return to You to be with you forever;*
 " and You, my Children, shall then mourn
 " no more. For *can the Children of the*
 " *Bride-groom mourn, as long as the Bride-*
 " *groom is with them?* * No, no: Your
 " Sorrow shall be turn'd into Joy. O my
 " Dear-loved Souls then! Be not dismay'd
 " as also those Others, who have no Hope. †
 " Think not yourselves abandon'd, because
 " you are left to grieve a while. Rather
 " enjoy the fruitful Grief. Now indeed You
 " have Sorrow; but I will see you again
 " and your Heart shall rejoice: And your
 " Joy No-One shall take from you. Envy
 " not then the Joy of Worldlings. The
 " World indeed shall rejoice. But ah! With
 " what a kind of Joy? Not with a Joy
 " like yours, but with an empty short fal-
 " lacious

* S. Matth.
ix.

† 1 Thessa-
lonians iv.

" lacious Joy which shall be turn'd to
 " Sorrow. Now indeed Worldlings have
 " Joy; tho' not a Joy of Peace to the Heart
 " but of Illusion to the Senses. Yet soon
 " will that Joy desist, even That: Then
 " will I look on them no more: Then
 " *shall their very Hearts be* grieved; and
 " *their Grief No-One shall take from*
 " *them.*" O important Contrast! O *Blessed*
 then are *They who mourn: For They shall*
be comforted! And surely then accursed,
 thrice accursed They must be, who are
 joyful here with the Joy of Worldlings;
 if They shall remain without Comfort.

Think not then, Dear-loved Christians,
 that what I have said is any Strain upon our
 Saviour's Words; a Comment of my own
 Invention; the subtle Speculation of a fertile
 Brain. So far is it from all This, that I'll
 be bold to say: No other natural Meaning
 can be given to the Text. What else could
 our Divine Lord mean, in placing the Sor-
 rows of his Elect in Apposition to the Joys
 of the Reprobate; if He did not mean
 This? Nay if He did not mean This; what
 Encouragement could it be for the Just to
 endure their Temporal Sorrows with Pa-
 tience and Fortitude? Tho' the Sorrows of
 the Just were to be converted into Joy: It
 would have been but a poor Encouragement
 to Them to persist in their Justice; if the
 Joys of the Wicked were not to be turn'd
 Vol. II. H h h into

into endless Sorrows. If the Just must *weep and lament* in this Life, before they can reach to Joy; and the Wicked may be joyful here and not have their Joy afterwards changed into endless Grief; the Wicked have the Advantage over the Good: And These would have but little Encouragement to be Just. Whereas it is a plain Case, *First*, that there is an absolute Contrast proposed to them by Christ, in this Gospel, between the little Sorrows They are to endure and the Joys which the Wicked shall taste of: And that, *Secondly*, He proposes this Contrast to them as an Encouragement to prefer his Service to That of the World in consideration of the Difference of the Rewards. It is full as plain then, that, tho' our Divine Lord does not delineate in express Terms the fatal Consequences of Worldly Joy, He sufficiently hints them to us in the Detail of this other Part of the Contrast, by minutely disclosing the sweet Effects of temporal Sorrow in his Elect. Ah Christians! If then the Joys of Worldlings are thus empty, short, fallacious, and fruitful in eternal Woe, as I have said, and as You can no longer doubt them to be, while You credit Jesus; What Christian in his Senses can envy Them? Who is there rather but must pity Them? If Christ must suffer to enter into his Glory; if Christians must share in his Sorrows to partake of his Joys; if They who have sinn'd must

mourn;

mourn; if Man cannot rejoice in this Life and in another too; What can the Joys. of Worldlings be, but unhappy Symptoms of their being reprov'd from everlasting Joy? And if this be the Case; with what better Eye can we behold their Mirth than That of Pity. Nay if this Dread Thought awakes not all our Pity; O! What shall excite Compassion in us?

II. But why do I dwell on the displeasing Subject? Ah! Let Us leave the contumacious Wicked to enjoy their miserable Gladness. Let Us, on the Reverse, lament while They rejoice; that, when their Time to weep shall come, We may deserve to see our *Sorrow turn'd into Joy*; and not, by joining in their false Alacrity, become Partakers in their Grievs. Ah Christians! You are after all but delicate Soldiers; if you cannot resolve to share a while in the Sorrows of your sacred Leader Jesus. You are quite mistaken; if You hope to taste of Pleasure here and in another World: Nay, if you think, that any Pleasure can be found in This; or that All which wears a Face of Joy on Earth is real Joy. No, no: The only real Joy, which can be tasted in this Life, is That of a Dis taste for every earthly Pleasure. And O! What greater Pleasure can there be than That which is felt in the Want of Relish for the World's Enjoyments;

ments; in a sovereign Contempt for All which is earthly; in a spotless Liberty of Heart, a perfect Purity of Conscience, a Life of Peace and Grace quite void of Terrors of the Approach of Death? Ah! This is Joy indeed: This is a Joy which belongs only to the Just: This is capable of filling the whole Heart of the Good and anticipating in their Souls the Beatitude of Heaven even in the Midst of their transient Sorrows. Who then, who can doubt but that the Sorrows of the Just are Matter of the justest Emulation, as They are the faithful Seeds of a Joy beyond Limits, a Joy without End?

To You then should properly belong, O sacred Champions of God's Glory, to defend his Cause at present: You whose dauntless Fortitude, as if entrench'd in Bodies of Steel and Bowels of Adamant, has caused even Tyranny itself to tremble, while It beheld you suffering for God the most excruciating Torments, and saw, at the same Time, the bitterest Tortures yield you exquisite Delight. O the fine Sight it must be, Beloved Brethren, to see those Holy Heroes forsake their wedded Loves, their tender Babes, their Friends and Families, to follow chearfully a barbarous Band of Executioners; abandon the Palaces, where they abode with so much Ease and Splendor, to earth themselves alive in Dungeons,

Dungeons, where they are fed with Sorrows and buried in a loathsome Obscurity; walk upon red-hot Coals or Bars, as if they were on Paths of Flowers; feast upon their Pains amidst the flaming Piles, and chant-out Psalms of heavenly Praise, like agonizing Swans, to sooth desponding Death.

To You likewise belongs the doing Honour to our God: O sacred Penitents! To You: O intrepid Strugglers against a giddy World! To You: O courageous Innocents, who wisely preserved a Life of Candour by a preventing State of anticipated Penance! For You are best Judges, what you gain'd by the Exchange; when, finding the World full irksome in it's very Joys, you turn'd your Backs on it, to seek the Enjoyment of your God so lovely in his very Rigour. O *Paul!* O *Anthony!* O *Magdalen!* O *Mary of Egypt!* Methinks, when I contemplate You profoundly buried in your penitential Caves, and holy Hermitages, I find you faithful to your every Day's Employ, to your constant Task to *weep lament* and sigh and mourn. But ah! sweet are the Tears which flow along your Cheeks: Sweet the Sighs which issue from your blessed Hearts. O blessed Parents! O Heavenly *JOHN of the Cross!* O Sacred *TERESA of JESUS!* What Days, what Nights, did You not spend in Tears and Sighs and Lamentations? And ah! How? how pleasing the Employ! How charming indeed

indeed must it not be when all your Tears but made you thirsty after more, when your incessant Prayers were --- *To suffer and be scorn'd for Christ --- Either to suffer, or to die for JESUS!* Hail glorious Saints then, whose Lives are the best Argument of what the experienced St. *Augustin* so elegantly say'd: "Sweeter by far are the Tears of a penitential Spirit, than all the Joys of Theaters." Hence then I argue; and, I think, not foreign to the Purpose: If the loving Providence of the Almighty has placed so much Delight in these Virtues, which are, of after all, of the most rugged, the most difficult; If It changed Coals of Fire into Flowers for his Martyrs; if It turn'd the most horrid Deserts into Gardens of Delight to his favourit Hermits; how can it be doubted but that every Sorrow, which the Just are oppress'd with by the World their Enemy, will, by him be changed into Joy? Ah! if such be the previous Consolations with which they are consoled who in this Life piously mourn with Christ in the Flesh; what Joy may we not conceive They will be rewarded with by Christ when in Glory. Ah! What then are the little transient Sorrows of the Just in this Life but Matter of the justest noblest Emulation? Well then might St. *PAUL* say, that *the Sufferings of this Time are not worthy to be compared to the future Glory which shall*

*shall be reveal'd in us, * and which those* * Romans
viii.
Sufferings shall end in.

O thrice Blessed then Ye just! Who but must envy you your Happiness of *weeping and lamenting* a little While; when *your Sorrows shall so soon be turn'd into Joy?* Courage then, Christians: Be yourselves. Dont give credit to the Language of Licentiousness, to the sophistic Fallacies of Worldlings: Yield rather to the Force of Reason. The vicious Worldlings, to Flatter their fallacious Appetites with the bitter Joys of their own inverted Diportment, call Modesty, a Melancholy; Temperance, a Penury; and Meekness, a Stupidity. Because the Pious are apt to appear with a Countenance composed, with humble Air, and serious Deportment; They falsely gather thence, that GOD treats his Servants with the roughest Usage, and gives them Nothing to feed on but Gall and Wormwood. Ah! They are Strangers to the sweet Delights of the spiritual Manna hidden under that Gravity of Features: They are ignorant, what it is to be *as sorrowful yet always rejoicing.* †

† 2 Cor. vi.

There has been a *Salomon*, tired and surfeited of earthly Joys; tho' sought with Eagerness; tho' reap'd with Ease; tho' enjoy'd in their most flattering Height. But never was there found as yet one Saint, who quarrel'd with his Sorrows. Even Holy JOB, who depreciates the Gaieties of Life with every

every vilifying Epithet, was never heard to vent one faint Reproach against his Dunghill. Surely then the Sorrows of the Good must want the Force to reach their Heart; or there must be a certain Something of ecstatic Joy within, which blunts the Edge of them and will not suffer them to affect it.

And yet, This notwithstanding, I dont pretend to deny that the first Entrances of Virtue may be somewhat rugged and untractable in the Beginning to unexperienced Feet. But then: For little You advance; the rugged Path smooths-up before you. And this I'll venture to promise, that, at every Step you take to move-on resolutely towards Perfection, your Spirits your Strength and your Comfort will augment.

The Children of *Israel* set-out on their Escape from the oppressive Servitude of *Egypt* to seek their Freedom in the Desert, and afterwards their Felicity in the Land of *Promise*. On the Margin of the Sea they look-back; and behold *Pharaoh*, Sword in Hand, pursues them with a powerful Army at his Heels of Enemies All powerful, All exasperated, All arm'd and breathing Revenge. Judge You the Plight the poor Fugitives must be in, anxious, disturb'd, dismay'd and doubtful how to evade the impending Dangers threatening them on every Side. To face-about is the same as to rush upon inevitable Ruin, amidst a furious People

People ready to devour them; amid'st a thick Array of Scimetars ready unsheathed for Butchery! And to throw themselves into the Flood, is encountering an Army of Waves and a Nation of Monsters. Dreadful Dilemma! Must They wait for Destruction, or run to provoke it? O the Perplexities! O the Panics! O the Agonies! But *Moses* lifts up his wonder-working Rod: And lo! Seas divide from Seas; They enter the Waters; Monsters disappear; the Waves subside; *Pharaoh* is besotted; his Army overwhelm'd; the Way lies before them smooth and open; their Retreat is secured behind by the re-joining Floods: And the Path, as they pass along, instead of Sands and Weeds, is overspread with Flowers. *Out of the Water which was before, says the Wise-Man, there appear'd dry Land and in the Red-Sea a Way without Impediment and out of the enormous Deep a springing Field.... And as Lambs they rejoiced, magnifying Thee, O Lord who did'st deliver them. * Be- * Wisdom* fore They attempted the Ford: O what ^{xix.} Difficulties! what Dangers threaten'd! Once they moved-on: O what Ease and Safety they found! Before, what Terrors oppress'd them! Afterwards, what Joy restored them! *As Lambs they rejoiced, magnifying Thee, O Lord, who did'st deliver them. What more natural Picture than This can we figure to ourselves of those intrepid Souls, who,*

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bravely turning their Backs on the more than *Egyptian* Slavery of this World, undertake to follow JESUS through the Paths which he has laid open to them by his all-smoothing Cross? Ere they set-out, O what Reluctances! What Diffidences! What Recoilings of the Heart! But once they have advanced a Step or two, how does all Terror vanish! How does the Way grow smooth! How soon soon is *their Sorrow turn'd into Joy*! Still then, O Christians, will you hesitate to follow Christ? Ah! Will you still despond? "What, *you cry*, shall I then break this Friendship? Shall I dismiss all this Attendance? I mortify this Sensuality? I conquer this Aversion? I restore these Fruits of Fraud? I recall this Calumny? I retrench this Pomp, this Luxury? I divorce this Passion, this Folly, this Evil-Habit, this lawless Love? I henceforth decline all Sport, all Pastime, all Enjoyment of the Earth? Alas! What would the World not say? And what a Gantlope must I not prepare for of Gibes and Sneers and Laughs and smart Reflections?" But away, Christians, away with these coward Reasonings. Begin the Journey once, and You also shall find the Way before you strew'd with Flowers. You --- shall be made Sorrowful, for a while; But soon your Sorrow shall be turn'd into Joy: In a word, your very Hearts shall

shall rejoice : And even as Lambs they shall rejoice, magnifying Thee, O Lord, who wil't deliver them. What shall I say? O blisful Mourning, big with such extatic Comfort! O Seeds of Joy beyond Expression! O Sorrows worthy our noblest Emulation!

“ Fine Talk, *you'll say!* But don't we
 “ see quite the Reverse? Don't we see those
 “ Persons, who undertake to follow Christ,
 “ always pensive, grave and anxious; full
 “ of Circumspection; confining all their
 “ Sentiments to rigorous Laws; never
 “ brightening at Entertainments; never
 “ new with Modes and Fashions; never
 “ elevated with new Employs, new Ho-
 “ nours, new Acquisitions; rarely at Balls,
 “ seldom at Entertainments, very seldom
 “ at any gay Amusements; and yet with
 “ all this, frequently harra's'd with Sick-
 “ ness, Poverty, Disasters and unexcited
 “ Insults? If all this then be true; how
 “ are all their Sorrows converted into Joys?
 “ If this be Gentleness with God; what
 “ must his Rigours be?” But O Mortals!
 How long will you let yourselves be thus
 imposed upon by outward Seemings? How
 long will you judge the Works of God
 without so much as knowing even the first
 Merits of the Cause? Why do you not in-
 form yourselves more clearly of the Truth
 by your own Practice? Why not try what

are the sovereign Charms of a Good Conscience to silence every Sorrow? Why not observe how fertile and how florid are the Ways by which your Saviour leads his Followers? Ah! The Reason is that You imagin the Way more rugged, more difficult, more dangerous and your Cross more heavy than it is. I don't dispute that there Hardships to endure, if you will carry on your Cross after Christ. But still I say, rugged as the Way may be, it is easier and safer to run along than creep. Heavy as your Cross may be it is lighter to carry than to drag. I don't then deny, the Sorrows of the Just to be a heavy Cross; but I pretend that they are of an easy, nay a pleasing Carriage; because the Just have God to support them under it. God himself descends and abides within Them to conquer every Difficulty with his Forces. The Just in short fatigue a little for God, but at the same Time they fatigue along with him. And who may not emulate and nobly envy the Sufferings and Sorrows of Those, who endure indeed a little Affliction for God, but happily endure it in the Society of God?

The Patriarch *Jacob* submitted to a fourteen-years Servitude for the Love of his darling *Rachel*. The Story I believe is more generally known than applied, and better remember'd than reflected on. In the *First Seven Years*, there is no Doubt but he must

must have endured some Fatigue: But the sacred *Code* assure us, that this Fatigue was not immoderate; in as much as it was render'd light by the Vigour of his Affection: JACOB therefore served for Rachel seven Years; and they seem'd but a few Days, because of the Greatness of his Love. In the Second Seven Years however we find not the least Symptom of Sorrow, not the least Hint of Fatigue. But whence this Difference? Did not Jacob serve these other seven Years with equal Punctuality, Labour and Sweat? Doubtless, he did. Whence came it then that the *first* seven Years were but lightly fatiguing; the *last* Seven free from all Fatigue? Ah! The Reason, which an ingenious Expositor gives us, is clear and consoling. Jacob during the *first* Term of his Servitude was labouring for Rachel; whom he already loved, but as yet possess'd only in Hopes: In the *Second*, He was toiling for Rachel in the Possession of Rachel. He who suffers for a beloved Object, which he wishes to possess, feels but little Pain; because the Edge of his Pains blunted by his Hopes is not acute enough to wound him or wounds him but gently. He, who reaches to enjoy for a Companion in his Toils the fondled Object of his Toils, not only does not suffer but reaps Delight from his Labours; because the little Bitter which still adhered to his Fatigues is absorb'd by the Sweets of the beloved Possession.

feffion. Dear-loved Christians! It is not of
 JACOB, as You may mistakenly fancy, that I
 mean principally to talk: No: I am talking
 of every Good Christian. I mean to ask you:
 What Sorrows, what Labours, what Pains,
 They can be sensible of, who suffer for God?
 who suffer with God? Look ye, favour'd Souls:
 You suffer for GOD, as JACOB suffer'd for
Rachel; and this Thought alone ought to suf-
 fice to sweeten every Pain. You suffer with
 GOD as *Jacob* did with *Rachel*; and this sole
 Reflection may not only sweeten all your Sor-
 rows but even turn them into Joys. And has
 not your gracious GOD given you the Affur-
 ance of all This? "Courage, *says He, by the*
 "*Mouth of his Prophet, Courage, my dear-*
 "*loved Children: For I am labouring with*
 "*You. You have but Half the Weight*
 "*upon You of the Labours you must pass*
 "*through: The other Half your GOD will*
 "*cheerfully co-operate to bear along with*
 "*You. Yes You shall serve him with one*
 "*Shoulder.* * The other He will supply.
 "*Fear not: Let not your Hands be slacken'd.*
 "*The Lord your GOD in the Midst of you*
 "*strong and mighty he will save you:*
 "*He will rejoice upon you in Gladness;*
 "*He will be silent in his Love: He will*
 "*be joyful upon you in Praise.* †

* *Sophonias*
 iii.

† *Ibid.*

Ah! Beloved Christians Such are the en-
 dearing Invitations your GOD and Saviour
 gives you, in the Holy Scriptures to suffer
 for

for and with him, that you may reign both in and through Him. Such the gracious Promises he makes you to lighten, nay to remove, the Sorrows you encounter for him. You must then indeed be extremely in the wrong; if to such Tenderness you still correspond with Obstinacy and Forwardness, and All for fear of a little Sorrow: Sorrow which has little more of what it expresses than the Name: Sorrow which has little Duration more than momentary: Sorrow which is fruitful in Nothing less than eternal Joy. While you are in this Vale of Tears you must weep and be sad. It is the Time of your Pregnancy, Christians. And what do you imagin you are pregnant with but JESUS CHRIST, whom you conceived in Baptism. There He began to form himself in your Souls; by another kind of Formation indeed than That in the Womb of his blessed Virgin-Mother: A Formation of Grace. In Her he was form'd, by the HOLY-GHOST, all at once and perfectly form'd: But in the Souls of Christians He is form'd by Degrees, is form'd through the Operation of his Grace, improved by our Co-operation. If you persevere then to make a good Use of your Sufferings and Sorrows; Christ will at length be perfectly form'd in you, and You shall bring him forth perfect in your Actions, *that is*, You shall become so like to JESUS CHRIST,

CHRIST, that his Eternal Father will acknowledge you for his Children; admit you to share of his Felicity; and *convert your Sorrow into Joy*. Then shall this Sickness torment no more; that Calumny give no more Shame; This other Loss afflict no longer: That other Grievance be repair'd. Now indeed are you like a Woman, who, when she *traveleth, bath Sorrow; because her Hour is come*, * for Suffering. But then you shall be like Her when deliver'd: Who, *When she hath brought forth the Child, remembereth no more the Anguish, for Joy that a Man is born into the World*. † For then You also, having brought forth JESUS CHRIST in your Lives, shall no more remember your past Sorrows, but with Extacies of Joy. Then, in a word, *your Hearts shall rejoice and your Joy No-one shall take from You*. O Be it so, All-Bounteous GOD! We earnestly implore Thee: *In the Name, &c.*

* In this Gospel.

† Ibid



SERMON



S E R M O N

O N T H E

Fourth SUNDAY after EASTER.

St. JOHN xvi. 7.

It is expedient for You, that I go. For if I go not; the Comforter shall not come to you: But if I go; I will send him to you.



CHRIST, Beloved Auditors, loved his Disciples with an Affection purely spiritual; and therefore well might he expect the like unmixt Affection from them. The Love of Christ's Disciples for Him was partly sensual; and therefore no wonder, He should not be pleased with it. Their Hearts were too sensitively attach'd to his bodily Presence; and this Attachment was such a Bar to the Presence of his Divine Spirit in them, that he absolutely declared to them that they should never be Partakers

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of the Latter, till he had wean'd them from the Former by departing from them. *It is expedient for you, says he, that I go: For if I go not; the Comforter shall not come to You.* If I had told You, Beloved, without quoting my Authority, that a sensual Attachment even to the Human Nature of JESUS CHRIST is an Impediment to the sacred Operations of his Divine Spirit in you; you would have hardly believed me. For, What can be more seemingly innocent, nay enviable, than an Excess of Affection for that Blessed Body, which was the Price of our Ransom? “O happy, happy Excess” (*You would cry*) which tends to the linking “us inseparably to that Model of Purity!” And yet You see such an Affection, such an Attachment, when sensual and therefore derogatory to the more sublime Love which we ought to cultivate for both his Divine and human Nature, is displeasing even to JESUS himself; and therefore He declares himself under the Necessity of weaning All Those from it who are to be actuated with his Holy Spirit. “*If I go not; the Comforter shall not come to You.* Your Affection for me is tender; but then your Tenderness has Something in it of sensual, Something of carnal: Whereas the *Comforter* is all Spirit and will not reside in any but a Heart which is void of all but what is spiritual, and unattach'd to any
“ created

“ created Object, as Such. *It is expedient*
 “ *therefore, that I go.* Because *if I go;* You
 “ will be somewhat wean’d from your sen-
 “ sual Tenderness for me: Your carnal Af-
 “ fection for my Human Nature will be-
 “ come more subservient to your spiritual
 “ Love of my Divine and human Substance:
 “ And then your Hearts will be fitter to re-
 “ ceive the HOLY-GHOST and *I will send*
 “ *him to You.*”

O Christians of mine! If then, as it ap-
 pears, the least Degree of sensual Attach-
 ment is of such dangerous Tendency, tho’
 fixt on so pure, so holy, an Object as the
 sacred Humanity of Christ; how very dan-
 gerous (think!) must it not be, to suffer your
 Hearts to be attach’d to any Objects in-
 consistent with a pure and perfect Love of
 God? This Reflection it is, which leads me
 now to exhort you, to banish from your
 Breasts every Attachment which forwards
 not that perfect Love you owe to God as
 God. To render then my Advice the more
 effectual I shall now endeavour to shew you.

I. The Nature of sensual Attachments
and the Marks to know them by; *and*

II. The Danger of such Attachments and
the Methods of shunning them.

“ O God! Thou Plenitude of Bliss! Em-
 “ bitter to our Souls and Senses every Object
 “ which does not lead to Thee: And since

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“ Thou

" Thou has't made our Heart's capacious
 " to enjoy Thee, let them be void of All
 " beside thyself: Nay keep them ever rest-
 " less till They repose in Thee."

I. When I talk of sensual Attachments to created Objects inconsistent with the pure and perfect Love we owe to our Lord God; it cannot well be supposed that I mean to talk of Those which are inseparable from actual or habitual Sin, whether mortal or venial. It being self-evident that every Attachment to Sin is not only dangerous but criminal; and not only inconsistent with a perfect Love of God, but, destructive of it.

There are, besides those Affections which are immediately sinful and therefore evidently to be avoided, Others of a less obvious Nature; which are not however always unpernicious in their Consequences. Such are those Attachments to earthly Goods which hurry Mankind into the perpetual restless Pursuit of Riches, Pleasures, Power and Esteem. Now we cannot be said to be attach'd to These; if we barely pursue them with Reference to God, and love them only as they are the Means of loving and honouring Him. For then our Love for them is calm, orderly, and subordinate to the Love of the Divine Donor of them: Or rather, to speak more properly,

perly, it is not Them we love, but God in them. An earthly Attachment is a violent Affection, the turbulent Impetuosity of a Heart, which, seeking itself in the Object It fondles, is carried or rather hurried out of itself into the created Good, which attracts it. This Kind of Attachment, as it is always fix'd, in opposition to the establish'd Oeconomy of the Divine Dictates, on Objects unworthy of, or not wholly deserving, the Affection of the Soul, is ever attended with disorderly Tumults in the Heart; often robs it of all Rest; and makes it lost to it's Owner, lost to itself, even to a Degree of Madness or Folly. I have many times seen it externally accompanied with Some of the strongest Degrees of convulsive Pangs, Voracity of Stomach, and Eagerness of Motion in every Limb: At other times I have seen it carried to the reversed Extremes, Decay of Appetite, a total Loss of Rest and Sleep and almost common Feeling: Which if not remedied in time; causes a slow-consuming Languor, that dries up the very Marrow, wastes the Seeds of Life, brings on Despair and even untimely Death.

Such are the common Progressions of Attachments to the very slightest Things; if not in time restrain'd. Nay there is no saying, to what Extravagance of Fury any Passion or Affection

Affection for the most trivial earthly Objects may proceed ; If it be suffer'd to get head and become violent. For every Violence of Affection is a kind of drunken Rage of the Soul, which unbraces all it's Harmony, and, without regard to the Merit of Demerit of the Things he loves, worries the whole Man with a Frenzy of Fondness for it, so as to keep him ever on the Rack of Jealousy, for fear Any besides himself should enjoy or even wish to enjoy it ; or else so as to torture him with restless Hatred for All who are not equally enamour'd with the Object he fondles. Such are the Disorders attending every Violence of Attachment : Disorders in themselves absolutely insupportable. And therefore as no Man, Beloved, can answer how soon the Circumstances gathering round his Affection, or the Object it is fix'd upon, will render his Attachment violent ; it must highly behove all Men to stand perpetually upon their guard against letting their Hearts be attach'd to any created Objects, tho' ever so trifling, ever so innocent. And the more ought they to stand upon their guard as All have the Seeds of such a pernicious Attachment in them ; and those Seeds in Every-One are big with the like evil Fruits : *Every-*

* Chap. i. One, says St. JAMES, * *is tempted by his own Concupiscence abstracted and allured. Afterwards*

wards Concupiscence, when it hath conceived, bringeth-forth Sin. But Sin, when it is consummate, engendereth Death.

To know therefore when our Affections for created Objects are free from dangerous Attachment and when not, we must pry into the Effects of them in us. If their Operations are calm and regular; if they keep an exact Conformity with the Love and Duty we owe to God, as our God; if we make them not Ends but Means, and love the Creatures only for the Creator's sake; in a word, if, mindful that *every excellent Present, as St. JAMES says, * and * Ibid every perfect Gift is from above, descending from the Father of Lights,* All our Fondness for the Goods of this Life is bounded to the applying them to such Uses as we think will best answer the Intention of the Divine Donor of them; and at the same time we endeavour to use them without Sensuality and to be ready to part with them without Regret; we have great Room to comfort ourselves with the Hopes, that our Affections for earthly Things are not Attachments to them. But---for little Excess, Irregularity, or Disorder, we discover in our Love for created Beings; for little it breaks-in upon our Accomplishment of the Ordinances, nay the Councils of God; for little, in short, that it obstructs, or even damps, the Fervor of our Love for Him;
our

our earthly Love is dangerous and we ought by all means to suppress it as a pernicious Attachment.

There are *Three* Sorts of Objects which are apt to insinuate themselves into the Heart of Man: Those which operate by the Instigations of Sensuality: Those which owe all their Attractives to the secret Impulse of Nature: And Those which receive all their Activity from the Dictates of Devotion. The *First* Sort are in themselves neither good nor bad; if consider'd abstractedly from the Effects they produce: Such are worldly Pomp and Splendor, Gaiety of Dress and Brilliancy of Equipage: Such are Balls, Operas, Comedies, and public Feasts and public Shews. All which it is absolutely possible to reconcile with the nicest Innocence. And yet if we consider them in Practice, how apt they are to dissipate the Soul, to enervate heavenly Affections, and banish from the Heart those nobler Objects which ought to engross it; we cannot but see that every Degree of Love for them is a dangerous Attachment, which every Christian ought to guard against, who aims at Perfection and wishes to improve in the seraphic Love of God.

Again That *Second* Sort of Objects, which, with the Voice of Nature, call upon us for Affection: Such as a Parent, a Child, a Consort, a Relation, a Benefactor and a Friend,

Friend, have Nothing of Evil in Them of themselves; but on the contrary are real Goods and worthy of our Affection. 'Tis we difform them into Evils, by loving them to an undue Excess; by suffering our Affection for them to raise disorderly Tumults in our Breasts; by carrying our Tenderness for them to sensual Passion, Anxiety, Jealousy, Sollicitude, or Neglect of superior Duties, such as the Duty of Advancement in the Love of God, of perfect Conformity with his divine Commands, and of intire Submission of Ourselves and all Things to his all-wise Disposal. And it is this Excess which makes our Affection for them a mere earthly Attachment, and Ourselves unworthy of the Name of Disciples of Christ. Hence Christ himself declares, that even this Love, tho' so natural, so lawful, so commendable in itself (if it be carried to Excess, if it be not regulated by Christian Prudence, and subordinate to the Will of God) is extremely dangerous; and may even forfeit to a Disciple of Christ the Privilege of a Disciple; by infringing upon the Honour due to Christ.

He who loveth Father or Mother; Son or Daughter above me, is not worthy of me, **St. Matth*
says Christ. * Nay our Divine Lord expresses^{x.}
himself elsewhere in yet stronger Terms:

If any Man, says he, † *come to me and hate* † *St. Luke*
not his Father and Mother, and Wife and † *xiv.*
Children, and Brethren and Sisters, nay and

his own Life besides; he cannot be my Disciple. So far then from letting the Love of created Objects, even of Those which the Laws of Nature command us to love, break-in upon the superior Love we owe to the Sovereign Source of their and our Beings: If we mean to have any Part with Christ in God; we must convert into Hatred every Affection for them which any way obstructs our Advancement in the pure Love of Him.

But there is *another* Kind of Objects, both within and without us, to all appearance, of a far more delicate Nature: Those I mean which receive all their Influence in our Affection from the Dictates of Devotion, and which are therefore deem'd Goods of the holiest, nay of the most desirable Kind. And yet even These are but too often fruitful in the Disorders and Excesses I have already mention'd; and therefore all Degrees of Attachment to them ought to be equally avoided: Such are your very frequent Confessions and Communions, Tenderneffes in Prayer, frequent spiritual Conferences, inward Consolations, holy Dissolvings of the Soul in Time of Meditation, and other religious Comforts, which devout Persons are often favour'd with. These are All in themselves great and desirable Blessings, where the Person, who is indulged with them, is under the Direction of a prudent, learned, holy

holy and experienced Pastor; and in a Christian Readiness to renounce them, when God shall be pleased to afflict him with the Denial of them. But whenever this Readiness is wanting in the Penitent; or the Director is not wholly versed in the Illusions attending on too great a Fondness for these spiritual Sensations; they are not safe. And therefore is it of the utmost Consequence for Christians to guard against an Excess of Desire or Fondness of them; lest, from a State of Piety, a sudden Disappointment throw them into an absolute Indevotion and Tepidity. For how often does it happen, that a Person, who has been indulged with these kinds of spiritual Comforts, on the first Barrenness of Devotion, grows melancholy, is tired with the least Aridity, grows fractious, dejected, discouraged; murmurs at his Affliction, repines, and gives himself up to spiritual Sloth the Mother of every Vice.

Another Danger too attending on these imperfect Degrees of Piety, is spiritual Pride? This often hurries devout Persons into a fond Opinion of their own little religious Actions or makes them, at least, tender of the Reputation of being Devout. And therefore ought We with redoubled Seriousness to be upon our Guard always to think but meanly of ourselves, and never to desire more Reputation than is profitable to

the Edification of our Neighbour and the Promotion of the Almighty's Honour. The chief Means then of effecting This will be a total Submission of ourselves to God in Spirituals as well as Temporals, without ever desiring any internal Comforts more than God is pleased to give us, and Those only as long as he sees them proper for us. O how many Souls have been lost for want of this Submission! How Many have fallen into Sin, Illusion, Heresy, Damnation, by too great an Attachment to spiritualized Sensuality. And how Many, for want of making God the chief Mover of all their Affections, have render'd the greatest spiritual Blessings the severest Curses! Such is the Nature and such the Marks of earthly Attachment.

II. After what I have said, it is almost needless to add any Thing, Christians, to convince you, how very dangerous it is to suffer your Hearts to be attached to Aught which is earthly, when you have a God who is worthy and has a Right to engross all your Affections. It is sufficient to convince us of This, that we reflect only on the Greatness of the Injury we do to God: An Injury so much the more crying, as He has commanded us to give our Hearts wholly to Him, and has a Right to those Hearts, in Consideration of what He is; what

what We are, and what He has done for us: A GOD who created us out of Nothing and created us for the Enjoyment of himself: Our Author and our End. *I the Lord,* says He, * *am your Beginning and your End.* * *Apocal. i.* What then can we expect; if we alienate our Hearts from Him, by attaching them to or dividing them with his Creatures, but that He should with-hold his Spirit from us and fulfill his Word, *the Holy-Ghost shall not come to you?* And What have we then to do but seriously to break with the World and reunite ourselves to him? What have we to trust to but seriously to employ the main Emotion of our Souls; Love, *I mean* to link ourselves to GOD. It was in this Love, that *Salomon*, that experienced Worldling, saw the Vanity of every Affection which tended not to GOD. It was in the perfect Love of GOD he saw the Emptiness of every other Object out of him. Let us then, Beloved Brethren, learn Wisdom from his Experience and recur to a serious Study of this sacred Affection: That we may drown all other Affections in it. Let neither Flesh, nor Blood, nor Life, nor Death, nor any other created Thing, separate us by false Attachment, from that pure Love of GOD which is in CHRIST JESUS. Let us remember that CHRIST himself would not suffer his Apostles to be sensually attach'd even to so holy an Object,

Object, so desirable a Good as his visible Presence, but obliged them to renounce it for a Time, as an Impediment to their Reception of the ampler Communications of his Holy Spirit: Because that Holy Spirit requires a Heart pure and void of every created Affection which may lessen the perfect Love of God. *If I do not go; the Holy-Ghost shall not come to you.*

Wherefore then, Beloved, let us henceforth endeavour to throw-off all Fondness for earthly Things, tho' seemingly ever so innocent: That our Hearts, as the Compass is, when distant from it's favorit Pole, may remain restless till they fix in God. Thou, O God, did'st create them to be so; and even, in spite of our Perversity, are they so. "Our Hearts," says *St. Augustin*, are restless, till "they repose in Thee." Yes, spite of all our Perversity, Thou alone can'st settle them; Thou alone replenish them. With other Things they may be taken-up, but never fill'd. No: It is thy Immenfity must fill them, or they remain insatiable. Fill them then, Gracious God, with thy enlivening Grace, and let all other Objects sicken (nay deaden) to our Souls but Thee. And since it is expedient for us, Lord, that Thou be sometime corporally absent from our Eyes; fulfill thy gracious Word *and send the Comforter to Us.* Which I beseech Thee; *In the Name, &c.*

SERMON



S E R M O N

O N T H E

Fifth SUNDAY after EASTER.

St. J O H N xvi. 24.

Until now You have not ask'd any Thing in my Name. Ask and you shall receive ; that your Joy may be full.



YOU wonder, Beloved Christians, why you advance so little in the great Work of your Salvation : You wonder, nay murmur, at the ill Success of your temporal Industry : And, when Things run counter to your Wishes ; how do you repine ! But ah Dearest Fellow-Christians ! Why do you wonder ? Why do you repine ? If you covet the Grace and Assistance of the Almighty ; why don't you ask it ? Is it so grievous a Task to recur for Relief, when you may have it for asking it ? So desirous is your Divine Benefactor of granting you every Thing you want,

want, that he graciously condescends to court You to ask it of him, by a solemn Promise, that you shall never ask in vain. *Amen, Amen I say to you : If you ask the Father any thing in my Name ; he will give it you.* Whom then can you blame, but yourselves, for the Want of every Blessing which is denied you ? The Gifts of God are surely worth very little, if they are not worth your asking for. And yet O how generally remiss are Christians in this Particular ! It is this Remissness your Saviour so tenderly complains of in the ineffable Words of my Text : *Until now you have not ask'd any Thing in my Name.* And I appeal to yourselves, if he has not the justest Cause of Complaint : Instead then of murmuring at his Providence and wondering, that you receive not every Favour you wish for ; rather wonder that you receive Any, while you really ask for None.

“ What ! Christians ; and not pray ? ’Tis
 “ a Mistake : We say our Prayers daily in
 “ private ; hear public Prayers on Holy-
 “ Days ; and, whenever we want Favours
 “ of God, are ready to ask them in Christ’s
 “ Name.” It may be so : Christians. But
 then, how do you say your Prayers ? How
 do you ask Blessings of God ? Every Re-
 quest, is not a Prayer ; and Christ has
 not promised, that any Thing else shall be
 heard but our Prayers. *Therefore I say*
to

to you, says Christ, * *all Things whatsoever you ask praying, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you.* * St. Mark xi.

Hence, Beloved, is the Mystery unfolded, why you want and wish and ask so many Favours of God more than you receive. It is not, that your Saviour has deceived you : But You have deceived yourselves. You have ask'd, and ask'd, and ask'd many Things in the Name of Christ. And yet, as he reproaches you, *Until now you have not ask'd any Thing in his Name : That is, You have not ask'd any Thing praying.* Hitherto you have used his holy Name in vain ; because you have either used it to wrong Purposes, or in a wrong Manner. Awake then, dear Fellow-Christians, from your Illusion : Accept the gracious Invitation of Christ to Prayer. *Ask and you shall receive, that your Joy may be full.* Ask as you ought ; ask *praying* ; and ask, for the Future, with double Diligence. That you may henceforth be able to practice this with Success, I shall briefly explain to you,

I. The Nature and Necessary Conditions of Prayer ; *and*

II. The fruitful wondrous Efficacy of It.

“ Mean time, O Thou, all-gracious God!

“ Dart thy bright Influence through our

“ Souls and lift our Hearts to Thee ; that,

“ tasting once the Sweets of spiritual Con-

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M m m

“ versation

“ conversation with Thee, we may grow eager
 “ after it and seek the true Delight, which
 “ Prayer affords to All who use it frequently
 “ and use it well.”

I. Prayer is a Kind of spiritual Intercourse with God: The only Means we Creatures have to converse with, and entertain, our Almighty Creator. 'Tis an humble Elevation of the Mind and Heart to his Divine Majesty, to implore the Grace Assistance and Relief we want of him in our Necessities. Now if we consider the infinit Distance between the Divine Being and Us; if we but reflect on our own contemptible Littleness, and the Immensity of his Greatness and Glory; we cannot but know, that it behoves us, in approaching to him, to use the utmost Circumspection in our Behaviour as well external as internal. And therefore whenever we go to our Prayers we cannot place ourselves in too reverential a Posture. With what profound Respect ought we not to kneel, when we are talking to him! How decently ought not our Limbs to be composed; our Body erect; our Knees on the Ground; our Eyes either modestly closed or devoutly fix'd on our Book, or on him, or his Altar, or on whatever else may lift our Attention to Him! How carefully ought we not to avoid lolling, leaning, gazing on one Side or another, and every Irreverence!

verence! What can be a greater Shame than to see a Creature behave with Indecency or Indifference, in the Presence of his Creator, in the very Act of imploring his Assistance? And yet O immortal Majesty of Heaven! O Thou before whom the Angels of Heaven tremble, and the Earth shakes from it's Foundations! How often art thou thus grossly insulted! How often do we behave, in praying to Thee, with an Indignity of Deportment, which we would not presume to use to many of our Fellow-Insects! And this is one Cause, Beloved, why you ask in vain many of the Favours you want.

Examen a little into your Behaviour at Prayer; and judge, from your Deportment at it, whether or not it is worthy to be call'd Prayer. Are you any sooner on your Knees than sitting back on your Heels; loling on the first Bench or Chair which is near you; staring about at every little Rumour you Hear; if not often interrupting your Prayers in Church with impertinent Chat? Who can give a better Account of Fashions at a Play, than you can at Church? Who is more censorious or watchful of a Neighbour's Conduct in a profane Assembly than you are in the House of God? And can you call this praying to God? No, it is insulting him. And therefore it is, as St. James the Apostle says, that you have not, because you ask not. That is, you do

not *ask praying*. You ask indeed; but not in a Manner becoming the Dignity of Prayer. In short, says the same holy Apostle. *You ask and receive not; because you ask amiss*. Whatever You do then, Christians; leave-off such Indecencies. Demean yourselves, in the awful Presence of God's all-seeing Majesty, with a Decorum at least equal to That, which you must think but due even to an Earthly Superior. If you are sick, or lame, or otherwise indisposed for kneeling; standing or sitting may be sometimes allow'd you. But then there is a Reverence to be shewn in the easiest Posture your Condition may require you to be in. In short, conversing with your Maker, whether sick or well, whether kneeling, standing, sitting, or laid-down, in Bed or out; your external Carriage should express internal Reverence. And This is one Condition necessary to raise your Petitions conformable to the Nature of Prayers.

And yet, Beloved, it is the Least of the Many Conditions with which your Petitions ought to be accompanied. If your Limbs should be thus composed, while you are at Prayers; how much more composed ought your Mind and Heart to be? God sees the One and the Other as distinctly as he does your external Members: And therefore cannot but be anger'd to Indignation, when he sees a Creature presuming to call his Attention down upon it; while at the same time that

very

very Creature disdains to honour his awful Majesty with the Attention which is sovereignly his due. Nay he expressly declares his Indignation at such Treatment by the Mouth of his holy Prophet *Isaiab*. * And our divine Saviour reiterates it to the *Pharisees* of his Time: † *Ye Hypocrites! well hath ISAIAH prophesied of you, saying, THIS PEOPLE* * *Isaiab* xxv. † *St. Matth* xv.
 HONoureth me with their Lips;
 BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME:
 AND IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME.
 Ah Christians! Christians! Are there no *Pharisees* here? No *Hypocrites* among you? Have You never stood in the Presence of your God, with your Lips uttering Petitions to him; while your Hearts have run riot after Objects quite foreign to him? If you have; in vain did you worship him; If you have; your Worship was a Profanation of his dread Majesty. And therefore is it no wonder, if, instead of Blessings, you reap'd Curses to yourselves: No wonder, if, instead of departing better'd in Yourself, better'd in your Circumstances, you have gone from his Presence in a worse Situation of Body Soul and Circumstance than you were in before. The Reason is Plain: *You ask'd and received not, because you ask'd amiss.*

But then, Beloved, let your Lips and your Hearts be ever so respectfully lifted up together to the Lord your God; you
 can

can have little Room to hope, that he will vouchsafe any Attention to the Overflowings of Either, unless you endeavour to present them to him pure and clean from every Thing which is sinful and displeasing in his Sight. Shall a poor Reptil of the Earth dare rise in Rebellion against the Author of his Being; persist in an actual Enmity with him; and yet presume to expect from him a Favour for asking it? What insolent Arrogance would not This be! Christ has indeed graciously made himself Guarantee, that all your Prayers shall be heard. But do Prayers consist merely in Words? No, *says venerable BEDE*, "Prayer consists not merely in the Utterance of a few supplicatory Words; but in faithfully and devoutly fulfilling our Duty to our Creator." Without This then, Christians, call your Petitions what you please: They are really no Prayers, or not Such as Christ promised a Blessing to. For, as the Wiseman says, *the Sacrifices of the Wicked are Abomination to God*. * And elsewhere, *He, who, turns away his Ears from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be execrable*. † Think then, Christians, and apply this Doctrin to yourselves. How often have You bent your Knees to God to implore his Assistance; while your Hearts have been bent to some sinful Idol of your own corrupt Inclinations? How

* Prov.
xv.

† Ibid
xxviii.

How often have You approach'd to that Fountain of Purity, crusted-over with Uncleanneſs! At leaſt, have you ever been ſufficiently careful 'ere you placed yourſelves in his awful Preſence, to purify your Hearts, by Contrition, from every Stain of ſinful Affections? If you have not; ceaſe to wonder at the little Advantage you have reap'd from your Petitions. Rather wonder at, and acknowledge, the merciful Goodneſs of God in not exterminating you from his Preſence for preſuming to inſult him with Prayers which were Abominations in his Sight, or at leaſt with ſuch Devotions as wanted the deſired Purity to render them pleaſing to Him. *You ask'd and received not:* And why, but *becauſe you ask'd amiſs?* It was for want of this deſired Purity, that *David*, with all his Devotion and Humiliation of Mind and Heart, in praying to God for the Life of the Child of *Bathſheba*, the Child of his Sin, was by the Almighty refus'd what he pray'd for. He had not ſufficiently cleanſed himſelf from Sin: His Concern for having offended his God was mixt with a Concern for the Fruit of his Offence: His Contrition was not equal to his Crime. And therefore, *He ask'd and received not, becauſe he ask'd amiſs.*

However, Beloved, remember that you are not promiſed *all Things you ask abſolutely,*

solutely, but all Things whatsoever you ask PRAYING. You ask then, but you cannot be said to ask *praying*; whenever you ask What is unlawful or unfit for you. And therefore never wonder if you are not gratified: But rather thank the infinit Goodness of GOD for denying you, when you are weak enough to make idle Petitions. The *Royal Prophet*, in the Abundance of his Grief, was weak enough to ask GOD for the Preservation of the Child's Life which he had gotten in Adultery. The Request was unlawful; because GOD had signified to him, by the Mouth of his Prophet *Nathan*, that He would manifest his Divine Justice by punishing him with the Death of that Child. *Again* the Life of that Child might probably have wean'd his Affections from GOD or might, at least, as he was so fond of it, have lessen'd his Contrition for the Crime, by which he got it: It could not therefore be proper for him, that the Child should live; the Life of which was of such dangerous Consequence to his Salvation, and so opposit to the Glory of GOD. No wonder therefore, that all his Tears, Humiliations, and Petitions for the Life of the Infant, should not avail. He sued, he petition'd, he ask'd; but he did not *ask praying*. In other words, *He ask'd and received not, because he ask'd amiss.*

In

In like Manner, Dearest Christians, you often ask Favours of Heaven. But alas, perhaps, if you knew what you ask; you would find, that it is What only the utmost Rigour of God's Justice can induce him to grant you. You ask Prosperity in Undertakings, which, at the Bottom, are, perhaps, criminal. Your Request then is unlawful; because it becomes the Justice of God, and his Glory requires it, that your Views should be disappointed. You ask, perhaps, the Acquisition of an easy Fortune: You ask the Possession of such a Woman for a Wife: You ask a Child or some other worldly Gratification. But how do you know, whether the Fortune, the Wife, or the Child, you ask, may not wean your Heart from God; fix your Attachment more strongly on earthly Happiness; and perhaps be the Occasion of your final Damnation? Therefore *You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss.*

If then, Beloved Christians, You desire to be refused Nothing You ask, let your Method be to ask Nothing but what is lawful and consistent with God's Glory and your eternal Salvation. As long as you ask heavenly Things, it is consistent with God's Glory and your Good that he should grant them; and, if you ask Them PRAYING, *that is*, with the outward and inward Dispositions worthy

of a truly Christian Prayer, *believe that you shall receive and they shall come unto you.* But whenever you ask what is unlawful or unfit, it becomes his immense Wisdom and Mercy to refuse it. And therefore *You will ask and receive not, because you ask amiss.* To be sure then, *I say* Beloved, of never being refused what you ask, ask the Grace of God; ask your eternal Salvation. These you are sure you may ask, and will receive; because Christ has promised; and therefore must and will grant them, in virtue of his Divine Promise. *Ask then the Kingdom of Heaven, and all Things else shall be added to you over and above,* that is to say, God's Grace and all the necessary and sufficient Means consistent with and conducive to it.

“ But what *(you'll say perhaps)* Is it
 “ then unlawful to ask for temporal
 “ Blessings? No: I don't say it is; provided you always ask them with a due Submission to God's blessed Will, and only on Condition of their being perfectly consistent with his Honour and your sovereign Good. I only say, that Many Things, you wish and petition for, are improper for you to receive; and therefore, if you ask them absolutely, you do not *ask praying.* And therefore *you ask and receive not, because you ask amiss.* But whatever lawful Favour
 you

you ask in the submissive conditional Manner which becomes a Christian, can never hurt you; but may obtain you what you yearn after; and will, if It be good for you.

But then that even these Prayers may have Force, they must be accompanied with Affiduity and Perseverance. You are not to expect that your Prayers are to be always granted as soon as offer'd. No, God often delays the Favours he means not to refuse: Either because he takes Delight in your conversing with him; or because he will put your Constancy and Fidelity to a Trial. Thus did he do by the Children of *Israel* when besieged by *Holofernes*: And thus may he do by You, when beset by Afflictions. Never then do You follow their Example. Never presume to fix a Time for his Mercies. *What are you to tempt the Lord your GOD? **

* *Judith*
viii.

No: Do not bind the Counsels of the Lord: But wait for Salvation of him and call upon him. In a word, pray, implore, beseech and importune God, with Patience, till he hears you. This your Divine Lord requires of you, and therefore tells you in the xviiiith of *St Luke*, that it *becometh always to pray, and not to be weary*. And the better to encourage you to Constancy adds two Parables: One of the Widow who forced even an unjust Judge by her

Importunities to render her Justice: The Other, in the xith Chapter, of a Man, who gain'd, by Importunity, the Loan of the three Loaves from his reluctant Neighbour: And these our Divine Master concludes with this gracious Invitation to Constancy, *I say to you: Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be open'd to you.*

II. Such, Beloved, are the Conditions requisit to elevate your Petitions to the Dignity of Prayers. Such are the Prayers acceptable to your Good God: And what is it such Prayers cannot, will not obtain you from Heaven, which is lawful for you to wish, or proper for you to ask? It was with such Prayers as these, that *Isaac* obtain'd Issue, after his Wife had been many years barren; that the holy Prophetess *Anna* was cured of her Barrenness in an advanced Age; that the holy Prophet *Elias* obtain'd the Blessing of a Child for his unfruitful Hostess. Such is the sovereign Efficacy of Prayer offer'd in this Manner, that God suffers himself, in some Sense, to be graciously forced by them. Thus the *Sick* of a *Leprosy* urged our Divine Lord to work a miraculous Cure on them: Thus did the *Centurion* solicit the Re-establishment of his Servant's Health: And thus did the *Prince* of the *Synagogue* force
JESUS

JESUS to restore to him living, his deceased Daughter: In a word, Brethren, if you pray thus, with outward Reverence, and with inward Purity, Attention, Fervor and Patience; what Miracle is there which your Prayers cannot, will not obtain? You may cure the most inveterate Diseases: You may recall departed Life: You may obtain the Removal of Mountains: Nay, you may remove the most enormous Iniquities from the Breast of Others or your own; force down the Grace of God; work your own Justification, and take Heaven by Violence. How else did the humble *Publican*, rid himself of the unwieldy Weight of Guilt he brought with him into the Temple? What more did He than, with the Disposition of Senses, Mind and Heart, I have mention'd to you, utter that humble Petition: GOD, *be merciful to me a Sinner!* * *St. Luke*
 And accordingly says our Blessed Saviour, * *xviii.*
This Man went down into his House justified. † Such, Dear Fellow-Christians, is the † *Ibid*
 Divine Efficacy of true Prayer. *He ask'd and received,* in-as-much as he *ask'd praying.*

You may see hence, Beloved, that I am not against Sinners saying their Prayers; if they say them in the Manner they ought. On the contrary: Sinners stand in the greatest Need of this sacred Remedy against their miserable State. Nor indeed have They any other Chance of rising from it than by solli-
 citing

citing Heaven for Grace and Mercy. But then what Grace, what Mercy, can a Sinner expect from his offended God; when He presumes to pray to Him, without first endeavouring to purify himself from the Vices which offend Him! Ah Sinners! This is all which is required of you, to make your Prayers as grateful in the Eyes of God as Those of the most innocent of his Saints. Hear then the ineffable gracious Terms which your God vouchsafes to make with
 * Chap. i. you, by the Mouth of his Prophet ISAIAH: *
Wash you make you clean: Cease to do Evil: Learn to do well; and though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be made white as Snow. What say you, Sinners? Can you have Souls and refuse so gracious an Invitation? It cannot be.

Apply then, Beloved, apply earnestly to Prayer. Sinners or Saints, you see, you may render it of sovereign Efficacy to you. Alas, alas! what innumerable Blessings and Graces have you hitherto lost for want of applying to it; at least as you ought! Enter then into yourselves and think you hear your blessed Redeemer kindly reproaching you, in the gracious Words of my Text: *Until now you have not ask'd any Thing in my Name. Ask and you shall receive, that your Joy may be full.* Ask for yourselves, says he, in my Name; and be not dismay'd. *Ask and you shall receive: If you ask the Father any*

any Thing in my Name; He will give it you Observe my dear Disciples. I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you. It is sufficient that I do it. Holy Father keep Them in thy Name, whom thou hast given me; that They may be One, as We also are. But why need I say so; when the Father is as ready to hear your Prayers in my Name as I am myself. For the Father himself loveth You, because You have loved Me. Ah Christians! What Inducements more can you wish or want, to engage you to pray? The eternal Father loves you, and has sent his Son to receive your Prayers: The Son loves you, and has offer'd himself your Mediator: And Both are desirous to communicate the Grace of the Holy-Ghost to you. All they wait for is, that You should vouchsafe to ask what They court you to receive. Ask then, as my Text invites you, Ask and you shall receive, that your Joy may be full. Which I beseech, &c. In the Name, &c.



SERMON



S E R M O N

O N T H E

SUNDAY after the *ASCENSION*.

St. J O H N xv. 26.

When the COMFORTER cometh, whom I will send you from the Father; the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father; He will give Testimony of Me: And You shall give Testimony of Me; because you are with me from the Beginning.



U R gracious Redeemer, Beloved Auditors, to console his Disciples on their approaching Loss of his visible Presence on Earth, promises them, in his stead, another Person of the Blessed Trinity, who shall be a *Comforter* to them, a Safe-guard and a Spirit of Truth. This Person then is the Holy-

HOLY-GHOST, that *Comforter*, that Divine Spirit, whom Christ, after his glorious Ascension, sent down on his Church; and who is always ready to enter into the Hearts of Such as worthily prepare for his Coming. And to what End does this Divine Guest vouchsafe, to Every-one of You, this ineffable Visit; but that, coming into your Souls, he may perpetually abide there and give *Testimony* of Christ within you? But how shall the HOLY-GHOST give this *Testimony* unless You-yourselfes join with him in it? He, then, this Spirit of Truth within you, must bear Witness of Christ: And You must bear Witness of him too. "Yes: You, O Christians! O Catholics! O Members of Christ's mystical Body! *You must give Testimony of Me*, says Christ, *because you are with me from the Beginning.*" The only Doubt is, in what Manner this *Testimony* is to be given. But can this be a Doubt with Catholics? You profess yourselves Disciples, and the only true Disciples of Christ: Do you not? And how are you, as his Disciples, to give *Testimony* of Him; if not by treading in his Steps, and making the lively Faith and Hope you have in him appear in the Good Works you do after him? Catholics then are of all People under an indispensable Obligation of not only being Good in Themselves; but even of inducing Others to be so, by their Example. To make

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this Truth therefore familiar to you, I shall consider separately

I. The great Duty and Advantages which should urge Catholics to give *Testimony* of Christ in the Sanctity of an edifying Life; and

II. The Danger and dreadful Consequences of their giving *Testimony* against Him, by the Scandal of an irregular Conduct.

“ O Thou, Dear Saviour! Hear our
 “ Sighs; fulfill Thy gracious Word, and
 “ be our Saviour still. Send down thy
 “ blessed Spirit to instruct, to comfort,
 “ and revive us with his Grace; that,
 “ full of Him and full of Thee, we may
 “ reflect thy holy Life in ours, and thus
 “ bear Witness of Thee.”

I. That Catholics are strictly bound to lead unblemish'd Lives, there need no Arguments to prove. The Claim They lay to being Christ's Disciples, his best, his eldest, only true Disciples, lays Them under the strictest Obligation of Sanctity in their private Conversation. The Pains our heavenly Master took to instruct his beloved Followers in Virtue and true Wisdom, not more by Precept than Example, had been to very little Purpose; if, after all, These had not been bound to practice the Same
 after

after him. Accordingly He tells them; * *I have given you an Example, that as I* ^{St. John xiii.} *have done, so You also may do.* In vain then, O Catholics, are you Disciples of Christ; if you copy not that Holiness which He has set you so lively an Example of in his own blessed Person.

Infidels, Heretics, Schismatics, may alledge *some* Excuse for the Irregularity of their Lives. They are not with Christ *from the Beginning*; They know him not, or know him but imperfectly: And therefore no wonder is it, that They follow not his Example and Precepts, or follow but by halves. Yet this Excuse will not suffice to screen them from God's Justice; tho' It may temper the Severity of his Judgment. Because, if they do not know Christ so well as You, they might have known him better than they do. And in That lies their Guilt: And for That shall they be punish'd. *He, who knew not and did Things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few,* says our Divine Saviour. † And ^{St. Luke xii.} why should he be beaten at all, but because he might have known? But still, as he actually does not know, his Punishment shall be abated, and his Stripes shall be *few*. O what infinit Mercy, my God, do'st Thou not make appear in the very midst of thy Justice!

But how can You, O Catholics, hope to screen yourselves from the utmost Rigour of his Justice; if you venture to abuse the Communication of his Goodness? You are Members of a holy Church, *which is with Christ from the Beginning*: You know his Will, and are perfectly grounded in his Doctrins: You have not only the Grace of Baptism to lift you above Infidels, but numberless Advantages above Many who lay Claim to That initial Mercy in common with You. What Pains are not taken to instruct you in your Catechism? What frequent Instructions do you not receive from your Directors; from Preachers; from devout Books; from the virtuous Example and improving Conversation of the Pious? What Comforts? What Recruits of Strength? What Graces? And what Inspirations have you not the Opportunity of frequently receiving from the Holy Sacraments? And if you abuse, or neglect, these Advantages; what can you expect, but that you should be punish'd by the Divine Justice with inexpressibly greater Severity than those unhappy Wretches who are without these Helps? O Remember then, that, *That Servant, who knows the Will of his Lord and prepares not himself, and does not according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes!** And what, Beloved Christians, can be

* Ibid.

be more perfectly consistent with God's equitable Mercy, than that, from You to whom much is given, much shall be required? *

* St. Luke
xii.

Again You, of all People, Beloved, have the greatest Interest to be watchful over your Conduct; that your Lives may be of a Piece with his, whose Holy Faith you profess. For ah! what is it you do not suffer here on Earth for that Faith? Are you not reviled, ill-treated, notoriously belied and set at Naught by People of every Profession? Are You not loaded with Taxes; stript of Defence; shut-out from every Privilege you have, by Birth, a Right to enjoy in your own native Land? And are you not (tho' Heaven can witness how unjustly) treated by Men of all Denominations as Enemies to your dear deluded Country? Nay (what is more) as Enemies to God, the very GOD for the Honour of whose Name you suffer? Still these Things are no more than you have had Reason to expect; because forewarn'd of them. For *these Things I have spoken to you*, says JESUS, *† that, when the Hour shall come, you may remember that I told you. That* is, Beloved, that you may remember your Divine Saviour, remember to suffer for him manfully, and remember to sanctify your Sufferings for him by being like him. For alas, O God of our Salvation! How sadly

† St. John
xvi.

Sadly wretched must not our Condition
 be ; should we suffer here for professing
 thy holy Faith, and yet suffer eternally
 hereafter for disgracing that holy Faith,
 with unsanctified Lives ! And yet, Catholics,
 it is not barely professing Christ, tho' you
 should seal that Profession with your Blood,
 which will make good Catholics of you.
 For *He, who is Christ's, must walk just as He*
 * 1 S. John ii. *walk'd*, as St. JOHN says. * Otherwise he
 is a Disgrace and not an Honour to his
 Blessed Master. And therefore, whatever
 Repulses a Catholic may meet with from
Men for calling himself a true Disciple of
 his heavenly Lord ; his last his worst Re-
 pulse will be, when Christ shall publicly
 refuse to own him Such, for want of that
 true Likeness to himself which Christians
 ought to have. O dire Illusion of the loose-
 living Catholic, who dies with delusive
 Thoughts of Persecutions suffer'd, and
 fraught with groundless Hopes of future
 Recompence ! O think, Dear Fellow-Suf-
 ferers ! When he appears before the Throne
 of God ; how dreadful must not his un-
 expected equitable Disappointment be, to
 hear his awful angry Judge, with stern
 Serenity pronounce the sad irrevocable
 Sentence : *I know you not ; Depart ye*
 † St. Matth xxv. *Cursed into everlasting Fire ! †*

Ah Christians ! Does the Sentence fright
 you ? Avoid it then. There is a milder,
 sweeter,

sweeter, more transporting, Sentence: *Come ye Blessed of my Father, possess You the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World:* * And This may be your own, * *Ibid* if you but please. To merit it then, be what you profess yourselves, your Saviour's true Disciples: *Learn from Him; for He is meek and humble of Heart:* † Put-on his Humbleness of Life and be like Him: Be sober, chaste, patient in Adversity, bounteous in Prosperity, just and Charitable: Be clean of Heart: Be poor in Spirit; and let your Virtues so abound, that, when He comes to separate the Virtuous from the Wicked, He may confess his Likeness in You, own you for his Disciples, and crown you with that never-ending Glory which he made you for.

But to be sure of This, beware, Beloved, that you depart not hence with half your Errand. 'Tis not enough, that you be Good yourselves, unless you labour to make Others so by your Example. *Neither do Man light a Candle and put it under a Bushel, but upon a Candlestick; that It may shine to All, who are in the House. So let your Light shine before Men; that they may see your Good-Works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven, and glorify his Son whom you profess to follow upon Earth. To what other Purpose is the HOLY-GHOST sent to You, but thus to give Testimony of Christ within*

within you? And how shall the HOLY-GHOST give *Testimony* of your Master in and through You; unless You cultivate his Grace in the Good-Works he inspires you to do? Without this in vain are you Christ's Disciples. *A Son honoureth his Father*, says * Chap. i. the Prophet MALACHY, * *and a Servant honoureth his Master: If then Christ be your Father; where is his Honour? If He is your Lord; where is his Fear*; unless, by your Example, You induce Others to honour and fear him as You fear him yourselves; *in a word*, unless You give *Testimony* of him; You, who are Catholics; *You, who are consequently with Him from the Beginning?*

That you take Care to be Good in yourselves, you do well for your own Sakes: But where is your Charity to your Neighbours, or what Benefit shall they reap from your Virtue and Innocence; if you render These useless by stifling them? *Be then Examples of the Faithful*, says † 1 Tim. iv. St. PAUL, † *in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Chastity.... that your Profiting may be manifest to All. For doing This, You shall save both yourselves and Them who hear You.* Yes you will save yourselves, and will be the happy Instruments of Salvation to Others; when, persuading Them to follow Christ, they see your Actions of a Piece with your Words. When you exhort Those, who do follow Christ, to follow

follow him on; or when you invite Those to seek him, who as yet do not know him; the Sanctity of an edifying Life, which they observe in you, shall add resistless Persuasion to your Words; and so shall You not only save your own Souls but Those of your Neighbours: So shall You, in a word, do Honour to the Lord you profess and suffer for, by giving *Testimony* of him. And that gracious Lord has promised, that *Every-One, who shall own him before Men, He-^{*St. Matth} himself will own before his Father who is^{x.} in Heaven. **

II. But ah Christians! Remember too that terrifying Menace which he adds against Those who do the Contrary: *That is, Those, who deny him before Men; or (what is the same) Those who give Testimony against him to Men: He who shall deny me before Men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in Heaven. †* And ^{† Ibid.} what else, Beloved, can You be said to do; if your Lives are the Reverse of his, irregular and full of Offence to weak Brethren, or affording Scandal to Those without? However publicly then you may profess Christ; however you may suffer for professing yourselves Catholic Christians; you still deny him, if your Actions are not answerable to your Profession. You may say, if you please, that You believe in Christ;

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but who will believe You? *He, who say'th*
** 1 St. John ii. that he knoweth Christ and keepeth not his*
Commandments, is a Liar and the Truth is
*not in him. **

Do You tell me, Beloved, you are Catholics? I cannot believe you; unless you prove yourselves Such by shewing me a nearer Likeness between you and Christ. What Opinion can I have of your Catholicity; if it is not powerful enough to make You lead better Lives than Those do, who are not Catholics? What Encouragement do I receive, or rather what Discouragement do I not receive, from You, to be a Catholic myself; if I see you, who are Catholics, suffer in this World, for being Such, and likely to suffer more in the Next, for being no better Livers than Others who are not Such?

Ah Brethren! Be serious then and reflect on the dangerous Consequences flowing from every the least Irregularity in your Conduct: And avoid them. Nay however convinced you may be, that the Thing you wish to do is right in itself; if it be not an essential Duty, omit it rather than give Offence to a weak Brother, who shall think otherwise. *Through your Knowledge shall the weak Brother perish, for whom Christ died. Alas! Sinning thus against the Brethren, and striking their weak Conscience, you sin against Christ. †* And can you do
 This

† 1 Cor.
 xiii.

This and call yourselves Christians? Can you pretend thus to walk by his Light? No, No: you deceive yourselves. *He who say'th he is in the Light and hateth his Brother,* says St. JOHN, * *is in Darkneſs even until* ^{*1 St. John ii.} *now. He, who loveth his Brother, He only, abideth in the Light and Scandal is not in him.* And truly, Brethren, how can loving a Brother and scandalizing a Brother agree together? As often then as you thus act in opposition to Chriſt; as often as any Action of yours gives Scandal to a weak Brother; ſo often are you in Darkneſs, ſo often do you bear *Teſtimony* againſt your Saviour: So often are you of the Number of Thoſe who *confels that they know GOD, but in their Works they deny him; whereas they* ^{† Titus i.} *are abominable and to every Good-work reprobate. †*

If ſuch be the dangerous Conſequences of giving Offence to weak Brethren among the Faithful; ah! think, deareſt Fellow Chriſtians, how much more abominable in the Sight of Chriſt muſt you not appear, ſhould any of your Actions give a juſt reaſon of Scandal to Thoſe, who are out of the Pales of his Church? Beſides the Detriment you do to your own Souls, what danger do you not incur of widening Many unhappy Wretches, who are Witneſſes to your irregular Conduct, ſtill more from the Faith of Chriſt and ſtrengthening their Prejudices againſt

his Church? Nay more, what Derision and Scandal do you not bring upon the holy Church which you disgrace, by professing yourselves Members of it? All which must necessarily aggravate your Guilt and therefore redouble the Severity of your Punishment. Hence it is that St. *Paul* tells the *Theſſalonian* Christians, that it is not enough for them to behave charitably and juſtly towards One-another, but their Christianity muſt carry them farther: They muſt do the ſame towards the Worſt of Infidels. *We deſire you Brethren, that you abound more: . . . And that you walk honeſtly towards Them who are without. **

* 1 *Theſſalonians* iv.

Thus alſo, after the Divine St. PAUL, I ſay to You, Beloved: It is not enough that you be juſt and charitable to One-another, to Catholics: No. *You muſt abound more*: You muſt be equally ſo to Heretics, to Heathens, to Atheiſts themſelves: You muſt be charitable to the Worſt of Men and juſt to the moſt Iniquitous: Faithful or Unfaithful, All have a Claim to your Honesty and Bounty. In a word, You muſt *walk honeſtly towards Thoſe who are without*. You are falſely accuſed of keeping no Faith, nay allowing no Faith to be kept, with Thoſe who join not in Communion with you. And would you not be highly criminal; ſhould you give room to your Enemies to confirm their Calumny againſt the Church: You, who are
Members

Members of It? Ought you not rather, in your Actions, to give the Lie to their Revilings, by paying Fraud with Honesty, retaliating Violence with Meekness, and inwardly practising the Justice and Charity which your holy Mother the Church teaches you to pay to All Men without Exception of Catholics, Heretics or Infidels?

Ah! Do it then, Beloved Christians, and shew yourselves Such. Let your Lives be such Pictures of That of Christ, that None, who are once Witnesses to the Things you practice, may need to ask what Religion you profess. Be mindful of your Dignity, and keep up to it. Be mindful of the manifold Favours you have received from Heaven; and, to the best of your Capacity; be grateful in the Use of them. Be mindful, as St. Peter *

says, that *You are a holy Nation, a People of Purchase; that you may declare his Virtues who hath call'd you to this marvelous Light.* *1S. Peter ii.

Finally, Dear Brethren, be mindful of the great Obligation you are under of giving *Testimony* of Christ in the Sanctity of an edifying Life; and let the Advantages you will reap from so doing encourage you to it, as the Dangers and dreadful Consequences of doing otherwise ought to deter you from giving *Testimony* against him. In the Words therefore of the same *Apostle*, let me beseech you Brethren, as Strangers and Pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal

* 1 S. Peter
 carnal Desires which war against the Soul. *
 Do this for your own Sakes : And, for the
 Sake of Christ and those precious Souls he
 died for, have your Conversation good a-
 mong Those who are not Catholics ; that, in
 what they misreport of you as of Evil-doers,
 considering you by your Good-works, they
 may glorify God in the Day of Visitation, †
 that is, in the Day when it shall please
 God to visit them with the Light of his
 Grace to see their Mistake. Know, Be-
 loved, that it is your Duty to do and suffer
 for and after Christ with Fidelity and Con-
 stancy. For so is the Will of God, that,
 doing well, you may make the Ignorance of
 unwise Men dumb. ‡ Then will You render
 Yourselves worthy of the Comforter's Ap-
 proach. And when the Comforter cometh,
 as my Text assures You, He will give
 Testimony of Christ : And you shall give
 Testimony of him : Because you are with
 him from the Beginning. And your Reward
 shall be, to be with him to the END and
 give endless Testimony of him before his
 Father in Heaven : Who will crown you
 with unspeakable Joy for all Eternity.
 Which, &c. In the Name, &c.



SERMON



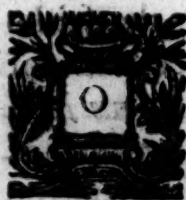
S E R M O N

O N T H E

P E N T E C O S T or W H I T - S U N D A Y

St. J O H N xiv. 23.

*If Any-one love Me ; He will keep my Word
and my Father will love Him : And We
will come to him and will make Abode
with him.*



ON This sacred Day, Dear Christian Auditors, our Holy Mother the Church commemorates the great and universal Blessing pour'd down upon Her in the Descent of the HOLY-GHOST on the Apostles. And in this annual Repetition of Thanks-giving to her heavenly Spouse for sending the sacred Comforter to Her, her Purpose is, not only to express her Gratitude to God for the invaluable Benefaction, but likewise to excite Us her Children to imitate those glorious Founders of Christianity

stianity by (this Day) disposing ourselves for receiving, as They did, the ineffable Communications of the same Divine Spirit in a more singular ample Manner than at other Times of the Year. And to induce us to set about this important Work the more earnestly, She shews us, how much it is our Interest; by reminding us that all We have of God must come from Him. Therefore does She devoutly address him in the *Sequence* of the *Mass* with that humble Apostrophé: *Without thy Light, Nothing is in Man but What is pernicious.* For our farther Encouragement, She proposes to us the Passage of the Gospel which I have just read to You: That We may see, in one Point of View, the Easiness of the Task She proposes to us and the Greatness of the Reward. All then, which is demanded of us, is the practical Love of JESUS, *that is*, the faithful steady Observance of his Doctrins for pure Love of himself: *If Any-one love Me; he will keep my Word.* The Recompence for doing which is Nothing less than the Possession of the HOLY-GHOST, the Love of JESUS and his Father: *And my Father will love him: And We will come to him and make Abode with him.* O the easy Task to love the lovely JESUS! Must we not be Monsters to find a Difficulty in loving Him, who has first loved us and proved his Love by such stupendous Methods? O the ineffable
Reward

Reward, to have our finite faint Affection recompensed with a boundless Ocean of prodigious Love; with the Possession of the HOLY-GHOST, the Love of God, the God of Love! O Amorous JESUS! What Delicacy of tender Love was This of thine, to send us, in thy stead, a *Comforter* so like Thyself, that, receiving Him, We might possess even Thee; and, almost transform'd Ourselves to Something of Divine, our Hearts might contain a whole flaming Paradise of ardent Love? But it is not now a Time, Beloved, to give my own Affections all their Scope; when I must try to fuel Yours, by suitable Instruction. To do this then, Beloved, I shall briefly shew You,

I. What are the chief Benefits accruing to a Soul which receives the HOLY-GHOST into it:

II. What are the Essentials requisite to render a Soul capable of receiving the HOLY-GHOST: *And*

III. What are the most effectual Means of attracting the HOLY-GHOST into a Soul already qualified to receive him.

“ Come then, O Spirit Divine, and light
 “ upon us All; replenish our Intellects
 “ with perfect Knowledge of Thee; and
 “ kindle in our Hearts the unconsuming
 “ Fire of thy Love.”

I. Before We can come to any familiar Solution of these Points, we must necessarily clear-up one, previous Question which may occur : *to wit*, What is here meant by receiving the HOLY-GHOST. There are then two Ways of receiving this Divine COMFORTER: The One by *justifying Grace*: The Other by *perfecting Love*. *Justifying Grace* consists in an absolute Freedom from all Mortal Sin and every actual Affection to it; and is a State of habitual Charity with GOD and Man, arising from Baptismal Innocence or sacramental Penance either in Act or Purpose with Contrition. But *perfecting Love* presupposes That and is a more ample Participation of the Divine Lights and Favours, whereby We are raised to a unitive Intimacy with GOD and establish'd in such an Eminence of solid Sanctity as mere justifying Grace seldom or never can attain to. Now from this Distinction it is self-evident, that the *Reception* of the HOLY-GHOST, which Christians ought in a special Manner to prepare themselves for 'at this Holy Time, cannot be understood to consist in a mere *justifying Grace*: For, *This Every Christian*, who has his Salvation ever so little at Heart, must be at all times possess'd of. What is meant then, in this Discourse, by the *Reception* of the HOLY-GHOST, is the

the *Reception* of *perfecting Grace*, or, in other Words, the *Reception* of a certain *sanctifying Habit* which may lift us above the habitual Affections and Inclinations of Nature to Sin and sinful Objects, and may strengthen in us the Love of God and the Contempt of the World. This is what St. PAUL means, when He exhorts us to *emulate the better Gifts*. * This, properly ^{* 1 Cor. xii.} speaking, is the Plenitude of every Good *Gift and every perfect Present from above, descending from the Father of Lights*. † And ^{† S. James i.} This, in the strictest Sense, may be call'd the *Reception* of the HOLY-GHOST. Since, on one hand, without the special Influence of his Divine Presence in the Soul, it is impossible we should enjoy the blessed Habit of *sanctifying Grace*; and, on the other Hand, once we are possess'd of that Habit, the consoling Effects which flow from it to the Soul are too sensible to leave us any Room to doubt of It's being in full Possession of that Divine Spirit.

Many and ineffable are the Gifts and Fruits accompanying this special Presence of the sacred *Comforter* in the Soul of a devout Christian: Which however it is needless* for me either to enumerate or explain; since you may find it already done in every Catechism. The only Ones then which I mean to take Notice of are Those which the Soul is generally the most sen-

sible of even in the Flesh: And These are
 --- A perfect Tranquility of Conscience; an
 intimate Union of Heart with God, and an
 habitual Elevation of the Mind to heavenly
 Things.

In fact, What can give a greater Serenity
 to the Conscience than the being not only
 free from Guilt, but even sensible of it's
 Freedom; as it actually must be, whenever
 and as long as this Divine Guest remains
 within the Soul and continues to shed there
 the Influences of his *perfecting Grace*. For
 as this sanctifying Quality is inseparable
 from the Love of God, It not only forwards
 us in the Progress of Charity, but makes
 us sensible of the sweet Effects of it; and
 therefore not only releases us from the
 Bands of Guilt but even animates us with
 a pleasing Consciousness of our Spiritual Free-
 dom, banishing that Fear and Dismay which
 are inherent in Sin and sinful Affections.

* 1 S. John
 iv.

*Fear is not in Charity, says St. JOHN, * But perfect Charity casteth out Fear; because Fear bath Pain. And He, who feareth, is not in perfect Charity.* The Heart then which possesses the HOLY-GHOST in the Grace of *perfecting* Charity, is not susceptible of those Terrors of Conscience which wait upon Guilt; but is replenish'd with such a lively Hope in the God who comforts it as is more than sufficient to render it serene and immoveable amidst every Temptation.

And

And what greater Consolation can It wish for than the being sensible, as it is, of having always nigh at hand and within Call, nay of actually possessing, a powerful Friend, a generous Guest and a fond Protector ; who not only professes and is able to assist it on every Emergency but actually does assist it and is eager after every Occasion of affording it. his effectual Aid ? What adverse Power can disturb the Tranquility of the Soul, which is once arrived to the Beatitude of being associated with this Divine Spirit, whose Delight it is to be Father to the Poor, Comforter of the Afflicted, and Help of the Distrest ? And all this the HOLY-GHOST is to Such as give him a worthy Reception into their Hearts.

St. PAUL tells us, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, * that Such and so intimate is the Union of this Divine Person with the Soul of a Christian who devoutly receives him in the Grace of *perfecting Love* ; that the blessed Effects of it are diffused throughout, and, as it were, intermix'd with, the very Sentiments of the Soul ; *The Charity of God*, says He, *is diffused in our Hearts by the HOLY-GHOST, who is given to us.* And it is probably from this figurative Expression of our Apostle, that St. *John Chrysostom* takes Occasion to say, that “ the “ Man, who once happily attains to such a “ blessed Union with the Divine Comforter, “ can

* Chap. v.

“ can no more be sensible of spiritual
 “ Thirst and Barrenness of Consolation,
 “ than a Person could be imagin’d to be
 “ capable of Drought, who should have a
 “ Well-spring within him.” If then the
 Apostle and Holy Father are worthy of
 Credit, as surely they are; since Nothing in
 Nature more intimately intermixes with the
 natural Juices of Man than the Liquids He
 imbibes, so Nothing created can admit of
 of a more intimate Union than That of
 the HOLY-GHOST, with a Soul which hap-
 pily attains to the Blessing of sanctifying
 Grace.

And what a Supernatural Elevation of
 Mind will not such a Union be able to
 raise the Soul to! What ample Discoveries
 of spiritual Wisdom must not ensue! What
 sacred salutary Truths before unknown!
The HOLY-GHOST, says JESUS, will teach
 you in that Hour: And what heavenly
 Knowledges becoming You to have, can
 escape your spiritual Penetration under the
 Tuition of such a Master? By the Help
 of his Light, you may, you will, you must
 be able to see the Fallacies of the World
 and even, as St PAUL says, to penetrate
 into the profoundest Mysteries of God’s
 sacred Truths. Nor need the Soul, in such
 an enviable Circumstance, be daunted or re-
 tardated from the Study of celestial Wisdom
 by any earthly Difficulties or Delays. No:

as venerable *Bede* observes, "The Soul
 " soon becomes an apt Scholar where God
 " is the Instructor; and That which the
 " Almighty teaches is quickly learnt." And
 how indeed should it be otherwise; when
 our Divine teacher is the very Light we see
 by as well as the Substance of all which We
 can see or which is worth our seeing? Such
 then are the blessed Advantages accruing
 to Christian Souls from a worthy Reception
 of the *Comforter* by Means of perfecting
 Grace. The next Question must be-----
 Who are the Persons capable of receiv-
 ing the HOLY-GHOST in this ineffable
 Manner?

II. All Mankind were created, and origi-
 nally design'd, to be capable of receiving
 Him into their Souls. And yet the blessed
 Privilege of receiving him is confer'd on
 far the smallest Part of Men; because much
 the greater Number, through their own
 Perversity, render themselves disqualified
 for this unspeakable Blessing, by neglecting
 to provide themselves with the Essentials
 indispensably required. Now These are:---
 That They be Christians,---That They
 keep within the Pale of Christ's Holy Ca-
 tholic Church,---and that They persevere
 in a State of *justifying* Grace.

Before St. *Peter* would consent, and in-
 deed before He could have Authority, to
 admit

admit the Multitudes to partake of the HOLY-GHOST in common with Him and the rest of the Apostles; one important Condition was previously and indispensably necessary, *namely*, that they should be baptized and profess the Name of JESUS CHRIST. And accordingly the Apostle requires it of Them before he will attempt to exert the Power of his Apostolic Commission in communicating the Divine Comforter to them. *Let*

▪ *Aas* ii.

Every-One of you be baptized in the Name of JESUS CHRIST unto the Remission of Sins, and Ye shall receive the HOLY-GHOST. * In reality, without this Condition it was impossible they should receive the *perfecting* Charity which is necessary to link the Soul in an intimate Union with the Divine Spirit.

“ For, *says the venerable St. GREGORY,*
 “ Charity does not preceed Faith; but
 “ Faith preceedes Charity: No Man can
 “ love, or fix his Hopes upon, What He
 “ does not believe in.” Nor does it at all weaken this Truth, that *the Grace of the HOLY-GHOST was pour’d-out upon the GENTILS,* at the Sermon of St. PETER,

† *Aas* xi.

ere they were baptized with Water, † For tho’ the Baptism of Water, where It may be had, is absolutely necessary to Salvation; yet, till it can be applied, the Baptism of Desire, accompanied with a lively Faith in JESUS CHRIST, and a steady Disposition and Purpose to be baptized with
 Water

Water as soon as possible, will suffice to make a Soul a Christian, and consequently to make it a fit Subject for the Reception of the HOLY-GHOST. This was the Case with those *Gentils*; and therefore, tho' they had not yet been regenerated with Water, there was no Obstacle to hinder their being first baptized *with the Holy-Ghost and with the Fire of perfecting Charity*, till Opportunity should serve for their being *re-born with Water also*. Nevertheless this Baptism of Desire, tho' sufficient to make Christians of them and to anticipate the ampler Communications of the HOLY-GHOST in their Souls, was not sufficient to take away their Obligation to be baptized with Water, when Opportunity should serve: But on the contrary strengthen'd that Obligation, in-as-much as It necessarily included a Purpose of it. And thus much is all which St. PETER means, when, *commanding* these new-inflamed Christians *to be baptized with Water in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST*, He says: *Can any Man forbid Water; that These should not be baptized, who have received the HOLY-GHOST as well as We?* * It is plain therefore, that those *Gentils*, tho' not baptized with Water, were really and truly Christians, in that they believed in JESUS CHRIST and were desirous to be baptized in his Name. For, had they not believed in

* *Ibid.*

* 1 St. John
xvi.

Christ; the HOLY-GHOST instead of visiting them with his Gifts must have pursued them with his Chastisements and *convicted them of Sin* for their Disbelief, according to the Promise of Christ to his Apostles. * And farther, had not their Faith in Christ produced in them the Desire of being baptized unto Remission of Sins through Him; the Apostle could not have answer'd exposing Christ's Holy Name and Sacrament to Contempt and Abuse, by forcing them upon Such as were not disposed to receive them. Whence it is very evident, that, for Any to possess the HOLY-GHOST with his perfecting Gifts, it is a Matter of indispensable Necessity, *that they be Christians.*

Not that You are therefore to imagin, that the barely being Christians will suffice to qualify You for the sanctifying Presence of this Divine Comforter. No: You must not only be Christians but true Ones: You must be Orthodox Christians: You must live within the Pale of Christ's Catholic Church. All Christians who are out of that Pale, are so by Heresy, Schism, or Excommunication; which are occasion'd by enormous Pride, Arrogance and Disobedience to the Doctrins and Precepts of Christ's mystical Spouse. Such therefore must consequently be incapable of the Reception of the HOLY-GHOST, who *resists the Proud and gives Grace only to the Humble.* † It must

† Prov.
iii.
St. James
iv.
1 S. Peter
v.

must be beneath the Dignity of the HOLY-GHOST, who is GOD of Justice and Love, to communicate himself to the Unjust or Uncharitable: And They, who disbelieve or disobey the Church, are Both. In short, as St. *Augustin* observes, “ Where sound
 “ Faith is absent, Justice cannot be present: For the *Just Man lives by Faith.* * *Romans i.*
 “ And where Justice is not, Charity cannot be; because *Charity worketh no Evil.* † *1 Cor. xiii.*
 “ Wherefore if Heretics, Schismatics and Excommunicated Persons were not void of
 “ all Justice and Charity; they would, as they do, through their Pride and Rebellion,
 “ lacerate the Catholic Church, the mystic Body of JESUS.” Such then surely can have no reasonable Hope of receiving the HOLY GHOST with his sanctifying Gifts; while they obstinately keep themselves at a Distance from his Graces and Lights, by perversely remaining on the wrong side of the Pale within which alone He sheds his Benign Influence, according to those remarkable Words of St. *Athanasius’s* Creed: “ Whoever will be saved, He must
 “ first and before all Things hold the Catholic Faith. Which, if-Any-One keep
 “ not intire and inviolate; without Doubt, He shall eternally perish.”

And full as vain are the Hopes of Such Catholics as, trusting to their being Members of Christ’s holy Church, suffer them-

selves to be deprived of all the Advantages
 of being so, by living in a State of Mortal
 Sin. For, alas, what can we compare the
 Souls of such wretched Catholics to, but
 to the putrified Limb of a physical Body;
 which, tho' it be not cut off, is dead
 to all the Functions of Life, and therefore
 incapable of sharing, in common with the
 Rest, any of the beneficent Influences com-
 municated to them from the Head or the
 Heart by the kindly Circulation of the Blood
 and Juices? To enjoy then the *sanctifying*
 Influence of the Holy-GHOST, even within
 the Pales of the Church; to obtain the
 Gifts of this divine *Comforter*, and to reap
 the blessed Fruits of his *perfecting* Presence
 in the Soul, It must first absolutely be in
 a State of *justifying* Grace, a State of saving
 Charity with God and Man. Without
 Charity we are Nothing, we can Nothing,
 we have Nothing to entitle us to the Com-
 munication of GOD's Goodness; We can-
 not be Members of Christ; or, at best, are
 but dead and odious Ones. "No-One
 " therefore, *says St. Augustin*, can with-
 " out Arrogance pretend to be renew'd in
 " the mystic Body of Christ, till He is
 " perfectly recover'd from the Corruption
 " of deadly Sin." Presume not then,
 Christians to complain that God neglects
 You: Nor foolishly conceit, that his Power
 is shorten'd from what It was, in that You
 receive

receive not the like Graces as the primitive Christians did: But rather conclude that your Fervor, Faith and Charity are infinitely short of theirs. Think on the Answer of *Isaiab* to the *Israelites*, which is so applicable to yourselves: "If God the HOLY-GHOST is sparing of his Gifts and Graces to You, more than he was to the Christians of Old; *It is not that the Power of God is abridged, or that He cannot save you. No: Your Iniquities and evil Life are the Cause, why GOD hides his Face from you and will not hear you.*"

If then You would have him turn again to You; if you desire his holy Presence in your Hearts qualify yourselves for the Reception of Him: Believe in JESUS CHRIST with unshaken Faith; submit to the Doctrine and Precepts of his holy Catholic Church with chearful Obedience; and prove yourselves worthy Children of that Church by persevering in a State of *justifying* Grace.

III. Thus much, Beloved Auditors, is essentially requisite to render You at all susceptible of any of the Graces of the HOLY-GHOST: And thus much will absolutely suffice, barely to save you: But it is far from being sufficient to sanctify you in this Life. If You mean to reach to any Degree of Perfection on this side of the Grave; if you covet any superior Favours from

from Heaven; if You wish to receive the Divine *Paraclete* in the same singular and ineffable Manner as the Apostles did on that sacred *Pentecost* which the Church, this Day, commemorates; You must go farther: You must apply the effectual Means to invite him into your Hearts. Such then are ---- *First*, a filial Confidence in his infinit Goodness; ---- *Secondly*, an unwearied Industry in super-erogatory Goodworks; ---- and *Thirdly*, an indefatigable Constancy in soliciting the Encrease of his Graces.

The HOLY-GHOST himself assures us, by the Mouth of the Wisest of Men, that They who place a proper Confidence in Him, shall come to the perfect Knowledge of his sacred Truths and enjoy their Fill of Consolation in him: *They, who put their Trust in GOD, shall understand Truth; and, faithful in Love, shall find their Repose in it.* * And how should it be otherwise, when, as St. JOHN assures us, this Divine Comforter himself is promised as the sovereign Recompence of Christian Hope? *He, who believeth in Me*, says Christ, † (that is, in the proper Sense of this Passage, *He, who confideth in Me,*) *as the Scripture sayth, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.* And this he said, adds the Evangelist, *of the Spirit which They should receive who believed in him, that is, who*
confided

* *Wisdom*
 iii.

† *1 S. John*
 vii.

confided in him. *For as yet the Spirit was not given; because JESUS was not yet glorified* * by his Father, nor honour'd with lively Confidence by his Disciples. Nothing is more capable of exciting even human Beings to Beneficence than a Confidence reposed in Them. much more then shall a lively Hope in GOD excite the Divine *Paraclete* to shower down his Graces with Profusion upon Such as stand in Need of them. For ---- whence, I beseech you, does reptil Man derive the generous Sentiments, He imbibes, but from that Fountain of all Generosity? Ah! Well then may St. *Austugin* tell us, that "He, who is joyful in Confidence, shall be rich in the Matter of his Hopes"

The Holy Father however can only mean This of a Reasonable Confidence: Such a One as is built on the steady Pursuit of meritorious Actions and supererogatory Good-works. For St. *Paul* assures us, and not without Reason, that *They, who sow sparingly, shall sparingly reap.* † And indeed They only, who prove their practical Love for Christ by the Observance of his Precepts and Counsels, are promised the Recompence of his and the eternal Father's Love, the HOLY-GHOST. *If Any One loves Me, says Christ; He will keep my Word and my Father will love him: And We will come to him and will*

* *Ibid.*

† 2 Cor. ix.

will make Abode with him. It is then our own extraordinary Love for Christ which must obtain us the extraordinary Graces of the Holy-GHOST, who is his Love; and it is our own Affiduity in the Practice of superabundant Works of Mercy towards Others and Self-denial towards ourselves, that we must build the Proofs of our Love for God. For *They, who love Christ ardently*, will be ardent to keep his Word, whether he command or only counsel. In short, They will study to be perfect even as their heavenly Father also is perfect. * “It is quite vain therefore, says St. Jerom, to expect any Advantage from other Men’s Works. No, Every One shall receive his Reward according and in proportion to his own Industry.” If then, O Dear-loved Brethren, You wish to receive a greater Share of Grace and Favours from the HOLY-GHOST than the Generality of Christians do; excell them in meritorious Actions. Be not content with barely doing what your Saviour commands; but aspire above mere Obligation and do the meritorious Works to which He counsels you! In a word, *emulate the better Gifts*, and sow as plentifully as you wish to mete. For He, who sows in Blessings, of Blessings shall reap: †. That is, provided You are equally diligent in soliciting Them with fervent Prayer. He

*S. Matth.
v.

†2Cor. ix.

He, who may have for asking and neglects to ask, may be said to refuse. If then You neglect to solicit the Divine Favours, which are offer'd to your Prayers; can you imagin the HOLY-GHOST will force them on you? No, Christians. He is ready to yield himself up to your Prayers: But then He expects that You should first invite him by Prayer. Ah! Pray then and pray earnestly. If you are repulsed; pray again. Solicit the Divine Favours again and again, till Importunity obtains your Request. Remember the Encouragement you have from Scripture and Experience. Recollect the Instance of the Man whose Importunity obtain'd the Loaves, which he had otherwise gone without. Copy after the Widow, who, by unwearied Solliciting, procured Justice even of an evil Judge who was little disposed to render it. *Elisha* had never received the double Spirit of *Elias*; if he not persevered to the last in solliciting it: The Apostles would not have been replenish'd with the HOLY-GHOST; if they had not persisted in sueing for his coming: And You must never expect the like Blessing, without a like Perseverance.

They were fervent in Prayer: They pray'd in Society: And, without suffering themselves to be deluded by the human Improbability of obtaining their pious Wish;

by the Delay of their Hopes; or by any other Obstacles; they still persevered in Piety and Prayer. And what was their Recompence?

- * *Acts* ii. Why says the sacred HISTORIAN, * *When the Days of Pentecost were accomplish'd, They were all together in one Place: And suddenly there was made a Sound from Heaven, as of a vehement Wind coming, and It fill'd the whole House where they were sitting. And there appear'd to them parted Tongues, as it were of Fire, and sat upon Every-One of them. And they were all replenish'd with the HOLY-GHOST and they began to speak with divers Tongues, according as the HOLY-GHOST gave them to speak.* O the blessed Premium of a little Confidence in God, a little Industry in Good-works, a little Fervor and Constancy in Prayer! Ah! Christians You see the glorious Goal before You. Courage then: Begin the Race; and *so run that you may obtain.*
- † *1 Cor.* ix. † Who knows, by copying the Example of those heroic Founders of Christianity, what Graces you may deserve from Heaven? Who knows, what external Marks of Favour You may be honour'd with by the HOLY-GHOST? Who can pretend with Certainty to say, that, in such Case, there shall not be reason to record of this very Christian Flock, that, *persevering with one Mind in Prayer, the HOLY-GHOST with visible Proofs of his* all-

all-powerful Grace, descended on all here present. At least if he give you not to speak in different Tongues; He may inflame you with such blessed Fruits and Gifts of Love as shall be one Day changed into, what only can surpass them, his eternal Glory. O Spirit Divine! Celestial Light! O HOLY-GHOST! O Love of God! O God of Love! Inflame these frozen Breasts of ours; enliven these bloodless Hearts; and change our earthly Affections into heavenly Ones. Teach us neither to seek nor wish for Aught beside thy Self: And let thy Presence fill us to Satiety. O never let our Memory forget thy Pleasure, or forget to do it. Banish from our Minds all Error and Illusion; and warmly move our Wills to practice constantly those Virtues which may bring us soonest and nearest to Thee. Come then, all-gracious Comforter, make thy Abode with us, and link us inseparably to Thy self forever. I beseech, &c. *In the Name, &c.*

End of the Second VOLUME.



all-powerful One, descended on the
mountain. At last it has given you not to
be in different Tongues; the many in-
crease you with such blessed peace and
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into what only can surpass them, the
eternal Glory. O Spirit Kindest, Calm-
est Light! O Holy-Ghost! O Love of
God! O God of Love! Incline these
torn hearts of ours; deliver these blood-
ied Hearts; and change our earthly Affec-
tions into heavenly Ones. Teach us rather
to seek not with our Angles beside thy Self;
And let thy Presence fill us to Eternity. O
never let our Memory forget thy Presence;
or forget to desire. Banish from our Minds
all Error and Illusion; and warmly more
our Wills to practice constantly those Vir-
tues which may bring us to God and near
to Thee. Come then, all-gracious One;
make thy Abode with us and look
as intently to Thy self forever. I be-
lieve, O! in the Name, Amen.

End of the Second Volume.

